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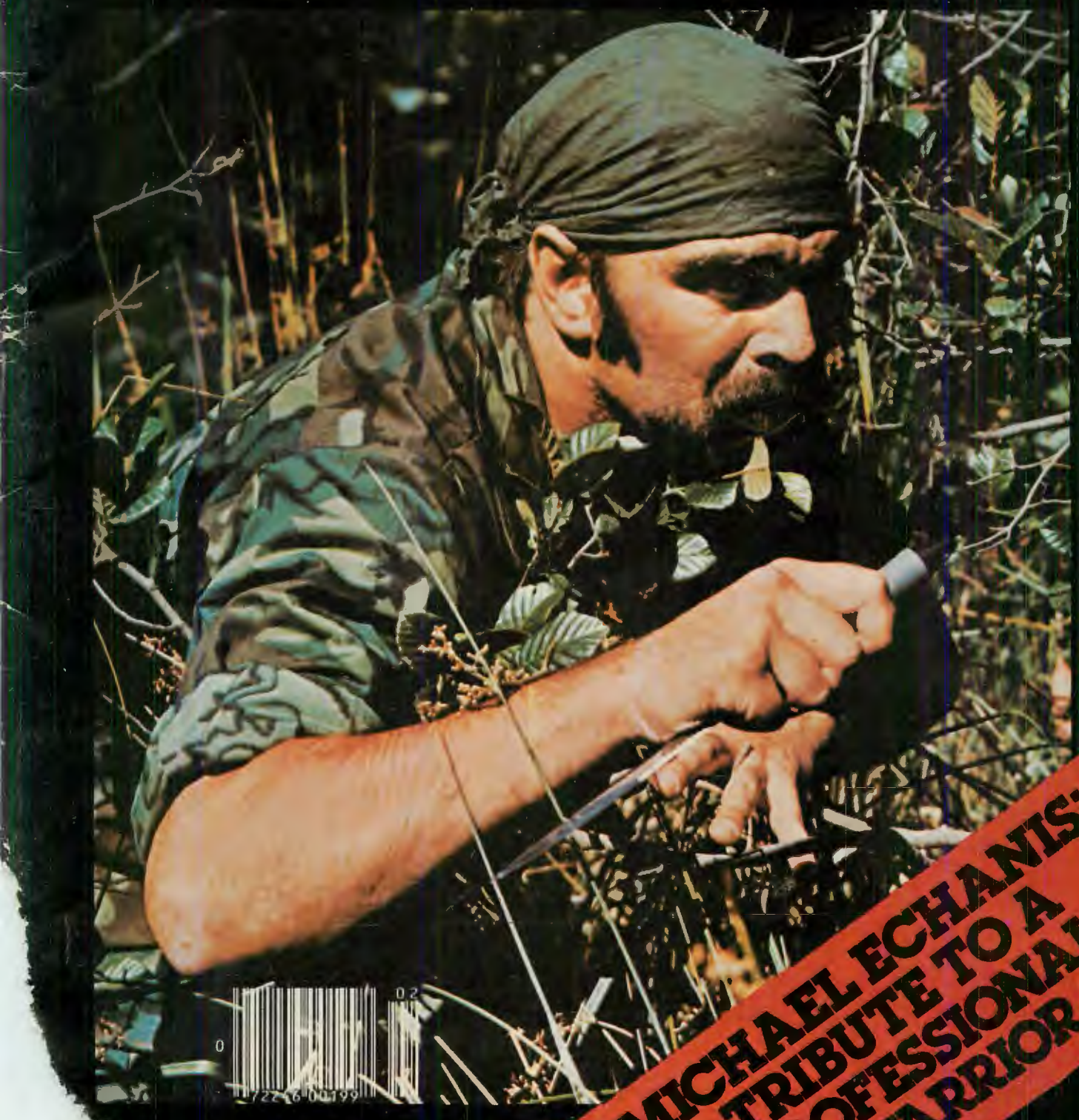

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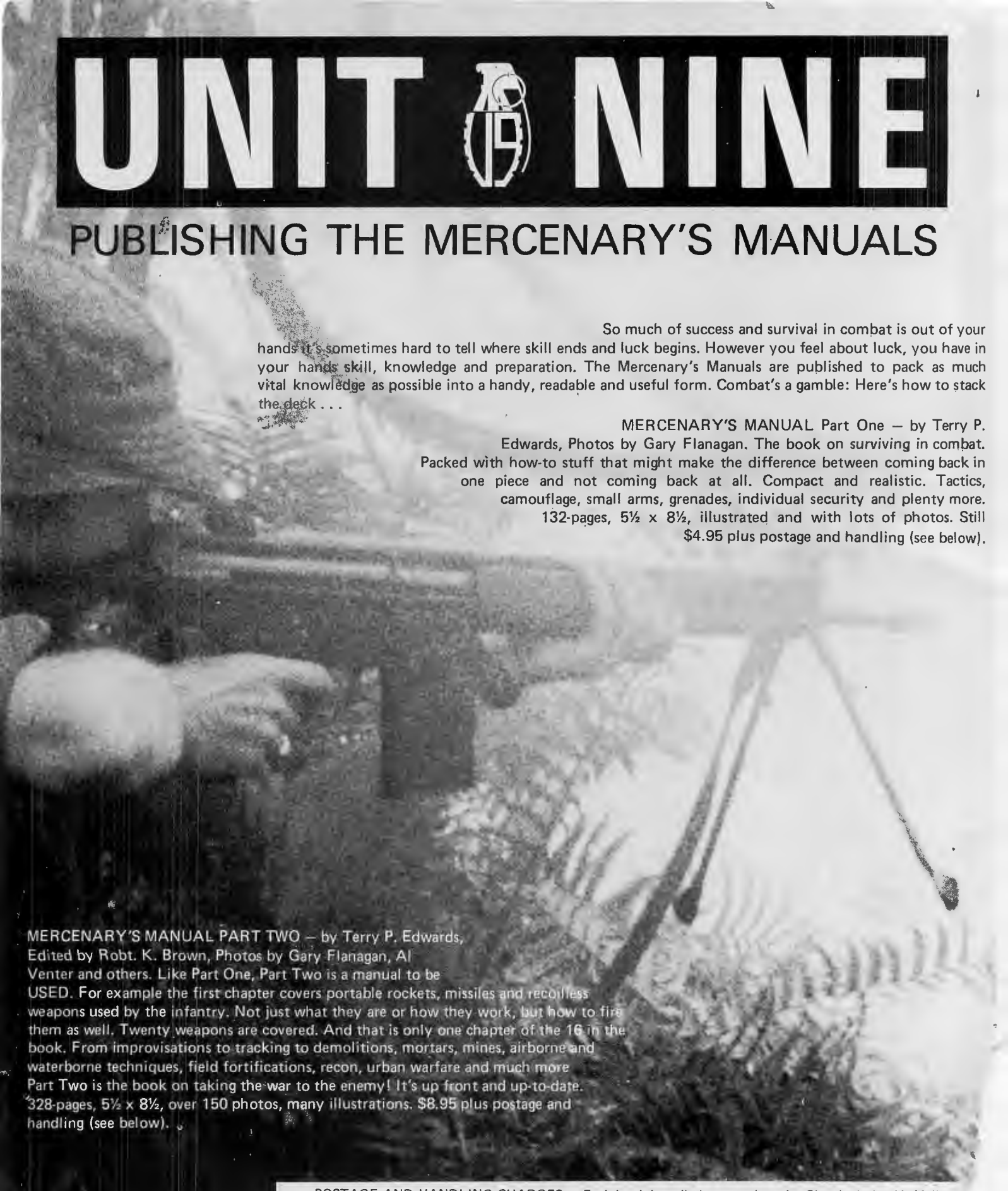

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You'll learn how you can wisely select the right place to live in the stormy times ahead, **using the 3 "acid tests," his own unique, proven approach**—just like Mr. Schneider did! He lives in a beautiful place situated in the mountains by a spring-fed creek without utility bills, polluted air, chemicalized food, and noise.

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NEWSPAPER AND READER COMMENTS

* "Sympathy and concern for an American populace headed toward what he feels is another period of 'hard times' prompted Hans J. Schneider to write **Timely and Profitable Help for Troubled Americans."—The Mail Tribune,** Medford, OR.

* "It is the best book I have read on the subject."—Dr. Marjorie Fry, Editor, Castle Rock, CO.

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The amazing Hans J. Schneider sets out on another hunt in the "backyard" of his mountain hideaway.

* **"Timely** . . . is a good prescription for those of us who no longer expect any help from the failing institutions of this world and recognize that we must work out our own salvation—physical, mental and spiritual."—Dr. John R. Andrews, M.D., Ellijay, GA.

No wonder, the 1st edition enjoyed such an overwhelming demand from across the nation that it sold out within a matter of months. Now the 2nd, enlarged edition also features "Recipes from Our Mountain Home" and "Health Hints" which helped his wife, in the terminal stage of cancer 6 years ago, to survive and enjoy life today.

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You may also wish Mr. Schneider's other books. **FLYING TO BE FREE,** "one of the most daring, exciting and life-changing true air adventure stories ever written," has a full-color cover, over 100 photos/illustrations, 256 pages and sells for $9.95. Hans was among the first German pilots licensed after WWII, trained by famous air aces. In this book he recounts his early barnstorming days, a very dangerous aviation mission through war-torn Europe into Africa, and some highlights of his world travels.

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In Memoriam:

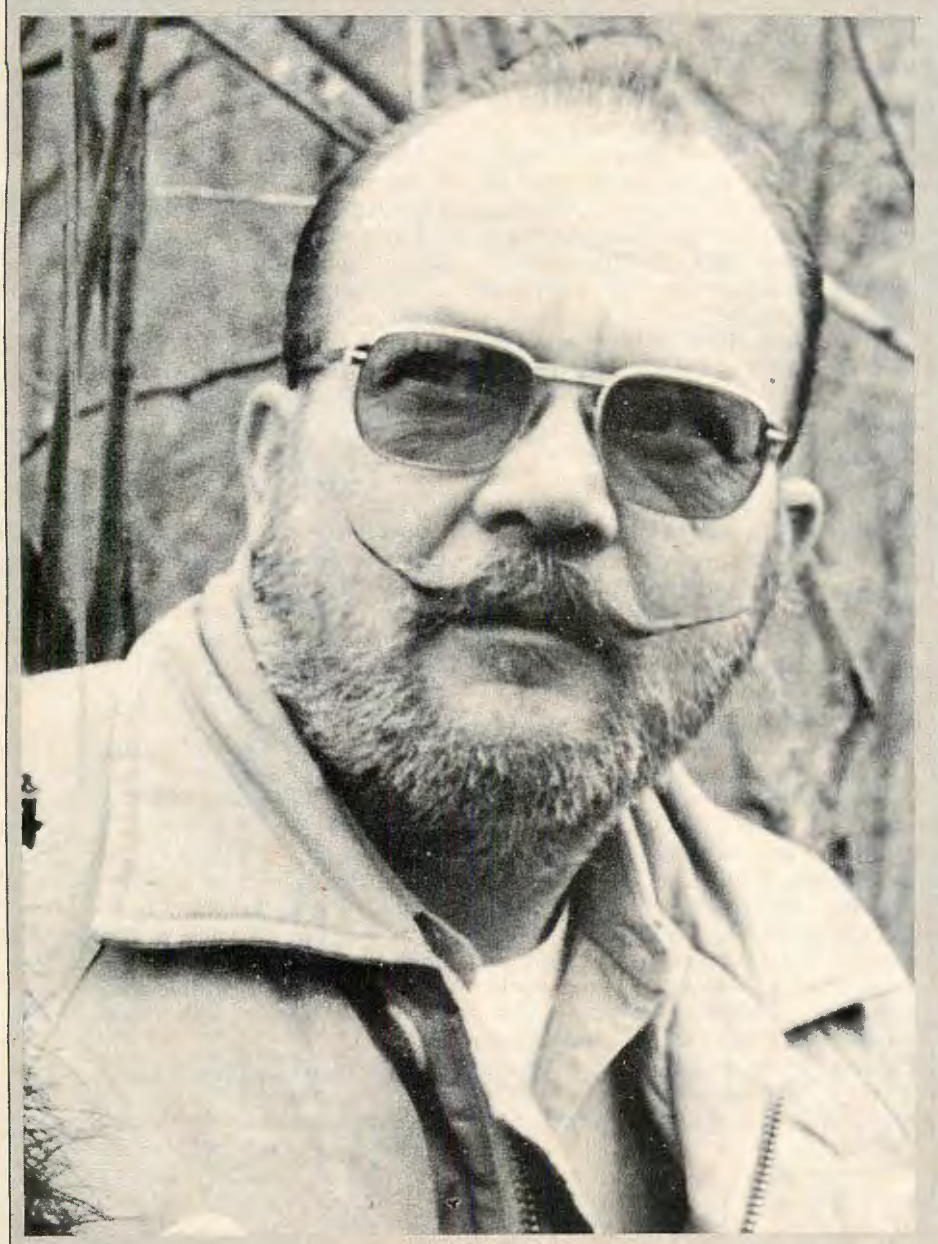
Major George C. Nonte

by Lee Jurras

Major George C. Nonte, Jr., (U.S. Army Ordnance Corps, Retired) died unexpectedly 30 June 1978 at his home in Peoria, Illinois, of an acute myocardial infarction. Major Nonte was 53 years old.

George, as he was known to his friends, was a staff member of SOF since its inception and served on the staff of eight other publications.

Author extraordinary, George's first book, *Cartridge Conversions,* was published in 1959 while he was still in the Army; this was followed by 24 other books over the next 19 years. Many of George's books, including *Cartridge Conversions* and *Pistolsmithing,* are considered standard reference works and will undoubtedly become collector's items.



In addition to his books, George wrote nearly 3000 feature articles, published worldwide, on firearms-related subjects. The end of his prolific writing on firearms will leave a void in this field that is unlikely to be filled.

An inveterate tinkerer and experimenter, particularly with handguns, the results of much of his tests and evaluations in the combat handgun field can be seen today in use by leading "combat pistolsmiths." In addition to his personal experimenting, George served as a technical consultant to many of the major handgun manufacturers both in the United States and abroad.

Although mild mannered, in many ways George was considered controversial. He normally said what he thought and did what he wanted. Those of us who knew him well remember him as one of those rare individuals who was truly "an individual," and his friends far outnumbered his foes.

Having shared no few campfires from Alaska to Africa, numerous quarts of J & B, and untold hours of technical and not so technical bull sessions both as a business consultant and friend, I share with George's family a deep personal loss ... Adios, amigo.

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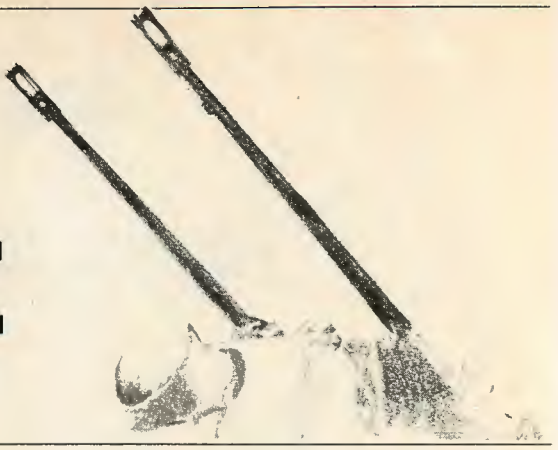

ECHANIS TRIBUTES...

Since the announcement of the Nicaraguan plane crash which took Mike Echanis' life on 8 September 1978, SOF's mail has included many tributes to this gallant soldier of fortune. Although our memorial article appears elsewhere in this issue, we are also letting our readers speak in memory of Mike:

Mike Echanis was much more than a soldier of fortune. He was a trained warrior who went far beyond the range of most martial artists in technical and mental achievements. When I first met him, he was 24 years old and capable of doing techniques that martial artists with 20 years of experience were not able to do. He possessed skills that most people are too timid to strive for. . . . Mike achieved this control through much discipline and training. . . .

Mike was a studio jumper. He would go to all the studios in an area and get an interview with the head instructor. If, after the interview, he thought you might know something he didn't, he would politely ask to spar. There was nothing hesitant about him when he came to trying out new studios. The first time I saw him was when he walked into my studio wearing his black Gi (karate uniform) and his black belt. We talked about martial arts for a while (feeling each other out); then we went in and fought for two hours straight. When we were through, we had acquired friendship and mutual respect for each other. . . .

Mike's greatest achievement was with the Gerber fighting knife. He was always working out with them, discovering new techniques, uncovering new principles. He was a genius in this field. He took old, worn-out ideas and went beyond them and developed a system of knife fighting that had not been seen before. After he developed his system, he wrote books about it. His two best sellers are *Knife Self-Defense for Combat* and *Knife Fighting, Knife Throwing for Combat* (O'Hara Publications, care of Phoenix Associates, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306).

Some people might look at Mike and say, "Well, he got what he deserved. If you're going to live by violence, you'll die by it." Mike would probably agree with them. According to a statement issued to *Black Belt* Magazine one month prior to his death, Mike stated, "But that's how I'm trained. I'm a warrior, I'm a soldier, a professional warrior. And I'm a warrior in my mind and my body, and this is the stand I take."

Mike was a man, a warrior, a martial artist, and a friend. I will miss him and so will hundreds of other dedicated martial artists the world over.

John M. LaTourrette
Boise, idaho

* * * * *

My condolences and sympathies to the family and friends of Michael D. Echanis, who died in a plane crash in Nicaragua.

I didn't know the man, except through articles and self-defense training sessions at the dojo, but I feel that he is a fine example of the men who make the word freedom meaningful.

Fighting men, like Mike Echanis, are the torch bearers of freedom. Tonight the lights burn a little dimmer.

Michael P. Lessner, Sr.
Gary, Indiana

* * * * *

I recently learned of the deaths of Mike Echanis, Carlos Sanders, and Ngoyen Van Ngoyen in Nicaragua. The UPI release made it sound rather like they had it coming to them: ("They) are the latest in a long parade of soldiers of fortune who died fighting to keep rightist regimes in power in Nicaragua."

Well, I knew Mike operationally, and I'm damned sure that he was down there to do something useful in the cause of freedom. Despite what Andrew Young & Co. have said about the country in question, there is a bit more personal freedom there than would be found in some People's Peaceful Progressive Proletarian Paradise. Anyway, I've learned from experience that any nation the Soviets, Cubans, or Chinese attack can't be all bad.

We were in different services — Green Berets as opposed to SEAL — and after deactivation took on different types of contract work, but we still belonged to the fraternity of fighting men who were dedicated to freedom. If it didn't agree with USDS policy, tough; so far, private citizens could still work for whomever and

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whatever they wished to. The USDS is currently in a unique situation: refusing to allow "members of rightist regines" to speak in America while actively inviting in terrorist leaders who represent a sadistic rabble.

Men like Mike and Carlos and Ngoyen are few and far between. If asked to choose, I'd rather let them speak for America than a few dimwits-with-portfolio one could mention offhand. They were not common men; they asked for nothing but the right to make their own choices and try to be uncommon men. The world needs more such men, for the battle for freedom will never be entirely won, nor, we hope, entirely lost. They will long be remembered by the true professionals in a professional field. Speaking for myself, should I ever lead a company of men into battle, I would ask for nothing more than to name the unit Liberty, with Echanis, Sanders and Ngoyen Platoons. Gentlemen, should you hear this, we salute you.

Cpt. S. Frederick Kerns, Ret.
Blacksville, West Virginia

* * * * *

I was dismayed to see in the newspaper today an account of the death of Mike Echanis in Nicaragua. According to the paper Mike was single so I send condolences to those whom I imagine were closest to him. It would seem, at first, to be a great waste to throw away such a mind and background of training on a small country, but this is the fate of many of his peers. Words cannot salve the void of his loss but a fitting epitaph would be that he was well known, admired, and highly respected in his field. Few of us can boast such an accomplishment.

Francis Marion
Golden Gate, Florida

* * * * *

Dear Editor:

I have been getting SOF ever since the first issue. It is the best magazine I have ever subscribed to. I am saddened by the death of your contributing editor Mike Echanis in Nicaragua. I have enjoyed all of your articles by or about him. ... I am sure Mike will be missed by many of your readers.

Thank you,
Gregory J. Webb
Lyons, Nebraska

* * * * *

Just wrote to tell you of my sense of loss at the death of Mike Echanis. I live in a small midwestern town in Nebraska that is very close to SAC operations in Omaha. Our family has a very keen sense of responsibility to defend our homeland. ... I felt Mike was doing what he thought was justice by wading into those quagmires to train the oppressed or needy to give them the same chance we would have here in Nebraska or the U.S., to defend ourselves. ... In his kind of work, Mike had to know in his heart someday he might meet with a violent death, but I'd rather go down fighting than live in fear all my life. I just would like to see some other country try to invade the U.S. — with guys like Mike Echanis and SOF magazine to educate us, they would be wasting their time.

Frank Wilkins
Blair, Nebraska

* * * * *

It was with deepest regret that I learned of the deaths of Mike Echanis and Carlos Sanders in a plane crash in Nicaragua....

As I see it, Valhalla has two unconventional new heroes to welcome to that far side of the Biofrost.

Sincerely,
S. G. Burkitt
West Frankfort, Illinois

* * * * *

Shit!

I just heard about Echanis and Sanders, I owe him my life, as do more than a few others, even though almost 20 years his senior. Another priceless casualty in this war most people don't even believe exists. Mike, as a warrior, was multiplied geometrically by all he taught and influenced, who in turn taught, and in turn and in turn, etc. Do you see him at that big long table with his drinking horn and haunch o' venison, the valkyries, the songs, the stories. Rest, old buddy, 'til the next go 'round.

Ambrose Red Moon
Atlanta, Georgia

MANY THANKS ...

Dear Sir:

Many thanks to all those who have written and sent stamps, etc., in response to our appeal. Due to military commitments and the heavy volume of mail received, I can not reply to everyone personally, but I assure you that your efforts are deeply appreciated. Thank you again and our very best wishes to you all. The Airborne Brotherhood has certainly shown its true colors.

Yours sincerely,
Pete Kelly
Centenary Park House
Seventh St.
Bulawayo, Rhodesia

LIBRARY RIP OFF ...

Dear Bob:

. . . While back at the U.S. Army Institute for Military Assistance, Ft. Bragg, NC, last June . . ., I went to look for your latest issue of *Soldier of Fortune.* I couldn't find a copy on the open magazine racks at the Marquand Library at the Institute. When I asked for a copy, the librarian informed me that SOF had become an "underground" publication there, that is to say, that SOF had become such a popular and sought-after magazine, especially among Special Forces and Airborne types (not to mention foreign-area officer types) that the magazines have been ripped off, repeatedly, not only current issues but

Continued on page 78

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BULLETIN BOARD

1978 IPSC U.S. NATIONALS . . .

On 11-14 October, the "big guns" in combat handgunning circles met in Saugus, California, to determine "who was who" at the International Practical Shooting Confederation U.S. National Championships. In 100-degree temperatures these pistoleros competed for three days for the coveted title of National Champion, in the blowing dust of southern California.

The results of the contest are included below. SOF staffer Chuck Taylor, in spite of several disasters, managed to remain in the top 15. Not bad for an old "grunt." Oh well, maybe next year!

IPSC NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS, 1978

1. Ross Seyfried	11. Chappie Gennett
2. Raul Walters	12. Dave Wheeler
3. Tom Campbell	13. Chuck Taylor
4. Mickey Fowler	14. Don Hamilton
5. S. Blankenbiller	15. Ray Neal
6. John Shaw	16. Lowell Larson
7. Ron Lerch	17. Stephen Knab
8. Keith Hamilton	18. Al Allen
9. Jerry Usher	19. Leonard Knight
10. Nick Pruitt	20. Mike Talton

It is interesting to note that last year's champion, Kirk Kirkham, experienced a disqualification on one of the stages, due to the loss of his weapon from its holster, and still managed to come in 42nd, out of the top 122 combat pistol shooters in the U.S. The ability to rebound from such an event is ample evidence of Kirk's abilities. We wish him luck for next year.

GUNSITE ADDRESS . . .

Numerous requests for the address of Jeff Cooper's Gunsite caused SOF staffers to realize that many readers don't associate Gunsite with Cooper's American Pistol Institute (see page 91, SOF, January 1979). They are one and the same. API is the official nomenclature while Gunsite is more a nickname. In any case, pick the name that suits you and write Box 401-F, Paulden, AZ 86334.

MORE RHODESIA HYPOCRISY . . .

On 4 September 1978, Rhodesian terrorists shot down an Air Rhodesia Viscount with a Russian-made SAM. 38 people died in the crash. The terrs then gunned down 10 of the 18 survivors, including seven women and two girls aged four and 11. Patriotic Front leader Josuah Nkomo bragged about the deed but denied his men massacred the survivors. We question how he could categorically deny his men were involved since terrs do not carry radios; have no means of commo with terr headquarters.

However, Callistus Ndlovii, Nkomo's rep. in NYC claimed that Nkomo's terrs had conducted the bloodbath. Not surprisingly, not one word of protest or condemnation from those so eminently concerned about human rights — to include the White House, State Department, the Pope, the U.N., or any Western nation. Yet these same spokesmen condemn Rhodesian strikes at the camps of these same terrorists in Zambia, claiming such ops are a "serious escalation of the war." To which we say, "Puke!"

WE DON'T RECRUIT . . .

We still receive numerous requests for guidance on how to obtain a job as a merc. We cannot be of help as nearly all merc operations utilize relatively few personnel who are recruited covertly by word of mouth or through personal contacts.

BUFKIN BLOWS IT . . .

Controversial sometime merc recruiter David Bufkin recently received 24 hours free room and board in a Nicaraguan jail. Bufkin and a friend decided to check out the merc opportunities in Nicaragua. Upon arriving in Miami, they apparently called the news media to notify the world they were on their way.

Bufkin called SOF upon his return from Managua and told us they had been arrested by Nicaraguan police. They had made contact with a low-ranking Nicaraguan Army officer and when things didn't move rapidly enough, they contracted a known Sandinista sympathizer. Thirty minutes later they were in jail.

Bufkin complained that he was treated roughly; thought he was going to be executed; that the Nicaraguans wondered if he was trying to sell his services to the highest bidder. 24 hours later, the two not-too-smart gringos were hustled on a plane and shipped back to the U.S. There's a moral to this story somewhere . . .

MIKE WILLIAMS FALLS . . .

Bad news. SOF author and former major in the Rhodesian Army was defeated

for the Democratic nomination to Congress in Florida's First District. Mike thanks all of you who supported him. Mike is presently working with Robin Moore on a book which expands on his experiences described in his series in SOF.

JOB OPS IN RHODESIA...

There are still no merc jobs available in Rhodesia although the armed forces are again taking foreigners after a six-month non-hiring policy. Rhodesia is not paying passage in advance but is reimbursing air fares, etc., after three months' service.

Anti-stocktheft positions are also available but you must show up in person to be considered. These jobs pay better than the military but there are fewer of them. There are agencies in Salisbury, such as Armaguard — phone 67768 — and Farm Employment — phone 20518 — who hire ranch security. These are seldom long-term jobs so take enough cash to survive on in between assignments. You can figure on Rh. $8.00 per day (U.S. $12.36) for hotels, food, etc. We recommend the Terreskane at Rh. $6.00 per day bed and breakfast or a better barg)in in the Earlside, at Rh. $5.00 per day including three meals; the meals here are a little skimpy but you sure won't starve. In the evenings socialize at bars such as the Monomatapa, Oasis, and Terreskane in Salisbury, the Cecil Hotel in Umtali, and the Chevron Hotel in Ft. Victoria. These

Above: SOF author Barney Barco with his tracker on large cattle ranch in Rhodesia.

places have a lot of military and farm traffic and a lot of guys have found jobs over an ice-cold Lion Lager.

Look for an in-depth article on anti-stock theft and ranch security from an SOF author who spent a year employed on one of the largest ranches in Rhodesia. Coming in the next issue of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine!

RUMOR MILL...

It is rumored that up to 1500 South Korean troops were abandoned in South Vietnam during the American withdrawal. Because of the present regime's inability to control the coast; the South Koreans have from time to time resupplied South Vietnamese still operating against the Communist regime by conventional submarines. Resupply consists primarily of small arms and ammunition. This may explain why a number of South Vietnamese Ranger and Marine units are still actively opposing the Communist regime.

Above: Prime Minister Ian D. Smith of Rhodesia listens as Chief Lobbyist John M. Snyder of the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms responds to questions at a reception in Washington, DC, during the Prime Minister's recent visit to the United States. Snyder, who is also director of publications and public affairs of the Citizens Committee, is a former associate editor of *The American Rifleman*, the NRA's official monthly journal; is now a candidate for NRA Board of Directors.

CLUBE MILITAR...

A group of veterans of the Portuguese overseas wars have founded the above-named club to unite those who actively repudiate Communism and all forms of subversion. For further information write: Clube Militar, c/o Box 42, Rand Airport 1419, Republic of South Africa.

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Mr. Hill is a renowned artist with many awards to his credit. He has spent several years in the U.S. Army rising through the ranks to Cpt. Inf. He has combined two major areas of interest to produce these beautiful works of art.

List of Illustrations

1. Minute Men
2. Rogers Rangers
3. The Swamp Fox
4. Col. John Mosby
5. Geronimo
6. T. E. Lawrence
7. Rangers
8. Special Forces—Vietnam

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WAR IN CENTRAL AMERICA...

Recent fighting in Nicaragua came close to sparking an international war in Central America. If fighting is resumed, the danger will be real that it will expand into a multi-national conflict. That is why the United States is leading a mediation effort in an attempt to maintain peace in Nicaragua.

Over the past few years there had been increasing terrorist acts in Nicaragua, together with some guerrilla activity. These activities were the work of the Cuba-supported Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional.

The terrorism culminated with the seizure of the National Palace by a Sandinista commando unit. The Palace houses a number of government ministries, as well as the congress. After several days of dickering, the Sandinistas left for Panama (and then on to Cuba) with a sum of money and political prisoners released by the government of President Anastasio Somoza.

The troubles did not end there, however. Businessmen launched a general strike. (Businessmen in Cuba in the late '50s also thought that if only Fulgencio Batista would leave, there would be tranquility and democracy in Cuba. Batista eventually did leave — and Cuba ended up with Fidel Castro and Communism.)

To support the strike, the Sandinistas attacked police and military posts in Managua and other cities. The government first concentrated on securing its control in Managua. Then it turned its attention to those cities where rebel forces had seized virtual control. The Sandinistas had taken over portions of the cities, isolating but not overrunning the local National Guard contingents. The cities held by the rebels: Masaya, Leon, Chinandega and Esteli.

One by one, the cities were retaken by government forces. Spearheading these forces were the 79 men of an elite commando unit trained by SOF's Mike Echanis. (Echanis died in a plane crash together with the chief of operations of the National Guard on 8 September.)

As the conflict continued, Sandinista units made incursions into Nicaragua from their base in Costa Rica. Nicaraguan forces chased them back across the border. And it was here that the possibility of an international war developed:

- Venezuela signed a mutual aid treaty with Costa Rica and sent four bombers and a transport plane to help that country.
- Panama sent four military helicopters to assist Costa Rica. Panama also tried to send 500 troops to Costa Rica, or perhaps they intended to go through Costa Rica and join the rebels in Nicaragua. At any rate, the Costa Ricans stopped them at the border.

With Cuba openly supporting the Sandinistas (some 300 of whom had been trained in Cuba), countries neighboring Nicaragua were highly concerned at the threat of a Sandinista/Communist takeover. So, reportedly, Guatemala sent 400 troops and El Salvador 300 troops to assist the Nicaragua National Guard. Honduras said it would send assistance if it was needed.

(Israel, too, was indirectly involved. Nicaragua and Israel have long been good friends, and Israeli military supplies -from Uzis to helmets — have been flowing into Nicaragua.)

There is now peace in Nicaragua. But if the internal war resumes, the other involved countries will certainly pick up where they left off, and there may be a Central American conflagration.

FRENCH MERC DEPARTS...

Col. Robert Denard, longtime merc of African fame, has departed the Comoro Islands which he seized in a lightning strike in May 1978. Denard, who had taken out Comoron citizenship and was chief of the army, apparently left because of widespread condemnation of the coup. The Organization of African Unity expelled the islands' delegates from the OAU's Council of Ministers meeting; threatened to boycott the Comoros delegation at the U.N. General Assembly, because Denard and his mercs held posts in the islands' administration.

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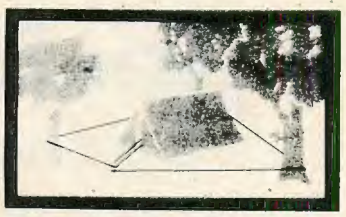

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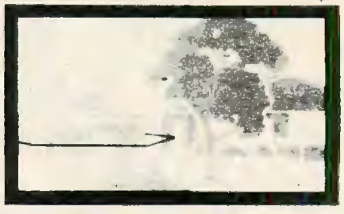

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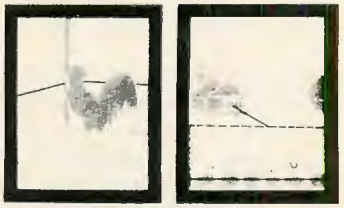

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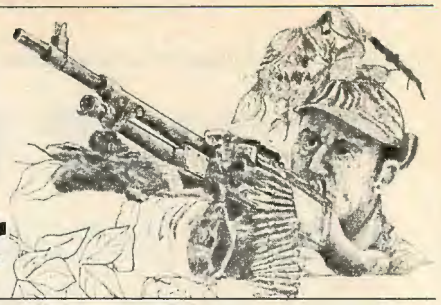

SMGs AND THE U.S. MILITARY: WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Over the last several decades, and particularly since the Korean War, it has been in vogue to acclaim the assault rifle concept as the ultimate individual weapons system, while declaring unequivocally that the submachinegun is on the way out. As a combat leader, I have had ample opportunity to observe both systems in the field and feel that the assault rifle is definitely *not* the answer to a number of weapons problems.

At the conclusion of World War II, the world military establishment evaluated the concept the Germans had created with their MP-44 and decided that they might well have had the right idea. What they actually had, of course, was a carbine with selective automatic-fire capability that utilized a cartridge that was less potent than a full-powered service cartridge but a good deal more powerful than a pistol round. The idea was interesting, but had several disadvantages from a tactical standpoint. First, the range and accuracy potential of the "assault rifle" cartridge were limited, making it suitable only for work under 200 meters. Second, for these same reasons, it was unsuitable for sniping or for use in machineguns, but it definitely had a certain appeal for use by tank riders and/or assault infantry troops because of its low recoil impulse and relatively minor muzzle blast. Reduced training costs and ammunition production expense were also considered, and that, along with the indisputable historic fact that ground combat ranges were becoming shorter with each conflict, sold the concept. As a result, the world military community feverishly launched itself into the era of the assault rifle.

The Russians, based on their experience with the MP-44/7.92mm Kurz from the muzzle end, came up with the *Avtomat Kalashnikov Model of 1947* and the 7.62x39mm M-43 cartridge. The AK-47, of course, needs no introduction and it's no secret that the 7.62x39mm is still the standard service cartridge of the Soviet Union and all Communist-bloc countries.

As much as the assault-rifle principle appealed to them, the British, however, were not completely sold on the idea of a reduced-power cartridge and developed the EM-2 in .280 (7mm). The EM-2 was a totally new concept in arms design and, not surprisingly, met with considerable opposition from conservative British ordnance officials. The EM-2 was indeed an ugly duckling, but passed all of the appropriate tests with little difficulty. The British were now convinced that they had the ideal individual weapons system. It possessed all of the attributes of an assault rifle that utilized a lower powered cartridge, but none of the disadvantages. They pressed hard for the adoption of the EM-2 by NATO.

The United States, as opposed to most of the world, did not jump on the bandwagon. Instead, the U.S. Army Ordnance Board began an exhaustive series of tests to determine precisely what type of weapon/cartridge best suited its needs. The tests were conducted from 1946 into the middle 1950s, and, after a myriad of different weapons were developed and tested, culminated in 1958 with the adoption of the M-14 (T-44) in 7.62mm NATO (.308).

The U.S. had been sold on the caliber .30 cartridge in one form or another for generations and stubbornly refused to accept the adoption of the .280 by NATO. Because of this, and the fact that the U.S. was the prime financier of NATO, the EM-2 (.280) failed to be adopted as NATO standard service. The British were then forced to turn their attention to the development of a caliber .30 rifle and finally adopted the FN-FAL (L1A1) as their service rifle to satisfy NATO ammunition continuity requirements. Interestingly enough, the U.S. had previously tested the FAL as the T-48 and rejected it!

The M-14 (T-44) replaced the cal. .30 Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR), the cal. .30 M-1 (Garand) rifle, the cal. .30 carbines M-1, M-2, and M-3, and the cal. .45 submachinegun M3A1. At this point, it appeared that the U.S. had satisfied all of its individual small arms requirements. The M-14 could be used as a squad automatic weapon with little modification, and was a superb service rifle. The logistics/maintenance headaches of too many different weapons and ammunition appeared to be rectified, at least as far as the U.S. Army was concerned.

However, less than five years later, the United States found itself involved in its first major guerrilla war: Vietnam. Combat ranges were found to be very short, and the Kennedy Administration "experts" claimed that the M-14 was just

too large and powerful for use from armored personnel carriers or in the jungle.

As a result of this "revelation," and quite a bit of political maneuvering, the Armalite AR-15 was hastily developed into the M-16 and immediately adopted as standard service for *all* U.S. military forces! The M-14's career was over and all of the years and money spent on its development were pushed aside for the M-16, for still nebulous reasons. The M-16, of course, is still with us and one can only hope that it is phased out before it must be used again!

The Russians, in the interim, are evaluating the Czech M-58, again in 7.62x39mm, as their standard service rifle, while the rest of the Communist-bloc countries appear to be satisfied with the AK and show no inclination towards changing.

So far this sounds like a dissertation on the history and development of the assault rifle, right? Well, not really. The indisputable fact is that an assault rifle, *any* assault rifle, is unnecessarily awkward and overly powerful for use by officers, NCOs, and non-infantry personnel. In addition, it is unsuitable as an individual weapon for the crews of armored vehicles and for specialized use, such as by airborne raiding parties.

With what, then, could these people be armed that would effectively defend them while requiring minimum space? You will have undoubtedly noticed that I said *defend.* The mission of medics, admin. personnel, engineers, officers, and NCOs dictates that they should *not* become involved in actual ground combat unless it is absolutely unavoidable. If they are shooting, they cannot be directing their troops, or doing their jobs, whatever they may be. Therefore, they have no need for a powerful assault rifle that was designed primarily for offensive use. They require only a compact, reliable, lightweight weapon that can be immediately utilized in their own defense, should the need arise. The modern SMG fills that need better than any pistol, shotgun, or rifle.

The Israelis obviously recognize this fact, since the *UZI* is quite prolific among their military personnel. The British adopted the *L2A3 Sterling* many years ago for the same reason. Why then, does the U.S. cling so stubbornly to the M-16? The need for an SMG is unquestionably recognized because the U.S. Army has attempted several "chop jobs" on the M-16 to convert it into an SMG, i.e. the XM-177E2 (CAR-15), that resulted in a totally egregious weapon that is virtually uncontrollable in fully automatic fire and fries the eyeballs of everyone in the vicinity with its muzzle blast! A semi-auto carbine: yes. An SMG. No way!

Several SMGs presently exist that are close to perfect for the purpose, but they

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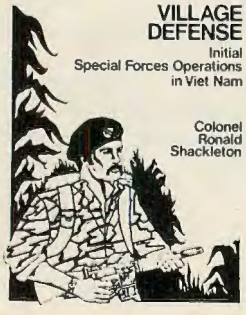

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have been collectively ignored by the U.S. military. Even the old M3A1 "grease gun" is a better weapon for a tank crewman, radio-telephone operator, or platoon leader than the M-16. Why this situation continues to exist is baffling.

As an infantry platoon leader in Vietnam, I gleefully discarded the M-16 for an "obsolete" M1A1 Thompson SMG because I found it most annoying to be constantly falling all over my M-16 while working with maps, radios, and directing troops. I generally used the Thompson only in my own defense, and it always did its job efficiently and reliably. In addition, I found it to be quite effective for specialized offensive work, such as close-in-house-to-house fighting, which is yet another excellent reason to return the SMG to the current military general issue inventory.

As far as the loudly touted logistics angle is concerned, service pistol ammo, which *all* SMGs use, is cheaper to manufacture than *any* rifle ammo (even the miniscule 5.56mm/.223), and since pistols are issued to many personnel anyway, ammunition is readily available.

To those concerned about maintenance, it can be quite honestly pointed out that the many thousands of SMGs declared "obsolete" by the U.S. military authorities and sold to other countries as surplus are still in service and going strong!

It has been argued that ammunition consumption would be excessive during training and that it takes too much time to properly train personnel to effectively shoot an SMG. Rubbish. To the proponents of these points I must say that, first, the protection of its personnel with the most appropriate weapon available should be of paramount importance to any military organization. Second, since the assault rifle and pistol do not satisfactorily fulfill this role and the SMG does, any time spent or costs incurred in training the individual to properly utilize his weapon are well justified.

So then, the SMG, in spite of what the armchair "experts" claim, is still a reliable, effective weapon and still fulfills the mission for which it was created. It only remains to convince the ever-lethargic U.S. military of this fact and remove the burden from their personnel, who are saddled with a weapon that is unsuitable for their needs.

With the need for an SMG established, let's examine the potential candidates for adoption. As previously mentioned, the weapon must be compact, light, reliable, and, of course, adequately powerful to put an assailant out of action.

The older SMGs of the "first generation," i.e. the Thompson, Bergmann, Lancaster, Solothurn et al, although robust and powerful enough to do the

WEAPON	CALIBER	O/ALL LENGTH-INCHES	WT.-LBS.	CYCLIC RATE-RMP	MAG. CAP.
1. Heckler & Koch HK-54	9mm parabellum	w/stock ext.-26.0 w/stock retr.-19.3	5.50	600	30
2. Walther MPK	9mm parabellum	w/stock ext.-25.96 w/stock retr.-14.75	6.27	550	32
3. L2A3 Sterling	9mm parabellum	w/stock ext.-28.0 w/stock retr.-19.0	6.0	550	34
4. MP-40	9mm parabellum	w/stock ext.-34.8 w/stock folded-24.8	8.87	500	32
5. UZI	9mm parabellum	w/stock ext.-25.2 w/stock retr.-17.9	8.80	650	25, 32, 40
6. U.S. M-2 carbine	cal. .30 USC	w/fixed stock-35.5 w/M1A1 folding stock-24.0	5.50	800-900	15, 30
7. XM177E2 (CAR-15)	5.56mm (.223)	w/stock ext.-28.7 w/stock retr.-22.5	5.90	750	20, 30
8. Reising M-50/55	cal. .45 ACP	Fixed stock (M-50)-35.75 Folding stock (M-55)-22.50	6.75 6.25	550 550	12, 20 12, 20
9. M3A1	cal. .45 ACP	w/stock ext.-29.80 w/stock retr.-22.80	8.15	350-450	30
10. MAC-10	cal. .45 ACP	w/stock ext.-17.50 w/stock retr.-11.50	7.10	700	30
11. M1928/M1/M1A1 Thompson	cal. .45 ACP	w/stock fixed-33.00 w/stock detached-25.00	10.75 8.75	650	20, 30

job, are heavy and lack compactness, which is second only to reliability and power in importance. In addition, because of numerous machining operations, they are prohibitively expensive to manufacture during wartime. This fact alone is sufficient to disqualify them from further military consideration.

However, the cal. .45 M3A1, MP-40, L2A3 Sterling, Walther MPK, MAC-10/11, Heckler & Koch MP-5, and the cal. .30 U.S. M-2 carbine are all cheaply produced and satisfy all of the requirements, although some definitely satisfy them better than others. For example, the U.S. cal. .30 M-2 carbine might be light, compact, reliable, and adequately potent, but it isn't as powerful or compact as the rest, even with the M1A1 folding stock. Such is also the case to a lesser degree with the M3A1, MP-40, and L2A3 Sterling. All three are equipped with folding stocks, but still are excessively bulky and/or heavier than the UZI, MAC-10/11, MPK, and MP-5.

So, practically speaking, the UZI, MAC-10/11, MPK, and MP-5 are the only SMGs in existence at this time that are ideally suited to modern military requirements.

While the UZI, MP-5, and MPK are superb weapons, they possess one glaring disadvantage in their present configuration as far as possible adoption by the U.S. military is concerned: their caliber. Being 9mms, adoption of any of them would require the adoption of the 9mm parabellum cartridge also, which the U.S. military has actively opposed for decades, *or* the addition of the 9mm to current inventory, which is undesirable from a logistics standpoint. Of course, they could be redesigned to handle the .45 ACP as well as the 9mm, so this objection could possibly be eliminated.

The MAC-10, as produced in .45 ACP, possesses all of the attributes of the UZI, MP-5, and MPK, and, in addition, is equipped for use with a sound-suppressor as it comes from the factory, a definite plus factor. Since it would not have to be redesigned in any way, as would the UZI, MP-5, and MPK, and satisfies the requirements of compactness, light weight, reliability, power, and manufacturing economy, my vote must go to the MAC-10 in .45 ACP.

Some have pointed out the MAC-11, in Kurz (.380 ACP), produces a lower recoil impulse than the .45 ACP MAC-10 and is therefore an easier weapon to handle. This may or may not be so, but, as with the SMGs chambered for the 9mm parabellum cartridge, its adoption would require either the replacement of the .45 ACP by the 9mm Kurz, or the addition of it to current inventory. Either way, a monumental logistics problem is created. Based on substantial experience with all three cartridges, I personally feel that the .45 ACP is just as easy to handle in an SMG as the 9mm parabellum or 9mm Kurz, and has proven itself to be a far superior manstopper than either. This coupled with the fact that the .45 is already available in immense quantities in U.S. military channels while the 9mm parabellum/9mm Kurz are not, reinforces my opinion on the superiority of the MAC-10 for adoption as the standard service SMG of the United States. I rest my case.

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TERRAIN & SITUATION

Jerry Ahern

One of the most convenient holsters for any kind of concealed handgun is the inside-the-pants type. Almost every major manufacturer offers this style of holster for a wide variety of revolvers and semi-automatics. For the most part, these holsters feature a spring steel belt clip, usually nickel plated. The clip goes over the trouser waistband and trouser belt. When the gun is drawn quickly, the holster can pull out with it. For the average gun carrier, this may not be a problem, but for those persons requiring speed, the situation can be suicidal.

Several makers, such as Jackass and George Lawrence, have alternative methods to secure the holster. Jackass uses a standard, high-quality, snap-on-a-wrap-around leather tongue. Lawrence solves this problem with a Velcro closure on a wrap-around piece. But the best solution of all, in a highly innovative holster, is from Alessi.

Alessi makes shoulder, belt, and ankle rigs of fine design. The inside-the-pants holster is no design afterthought.

On and off for about the last year, I've been using an Alessi inside holster with my PPK/S. The holster is wet molded of good quality leather. The construction of the holster features a paddle style extension which breaks the shape or outline of the holster and provides a flatter silhouette and more surface for adhesion between the trousers and undergarments. The holster is secured to the belt by means of a leather wrap-around tongue, like the Jackass and Lawrence models.

However, the Alessi features a one-way dot snap. The advantage of this simple feature is enormous. The Velcro arrangement of the Lawrence holster is secure but slightly bulkier. The Jackass holster is bulkier also. And although the Jackass rig is far more secure than the ordinary spring steel clip and quite well-made, the snap can open under stress. In experiments with attempted snatching of guns worn by another, as in a criminal grabbing an arresting officer's gun, the holster snap did open.

The Alessi inside-the-pants holster did not open, at least in experiments we have conducted. The one-way snap feature makes it the best blend of concealability and positive retention available. At around $16.00, the Alessi is quite a bit more expensive than the average inside holster, yet for the person who needs a concealed handgun fast from an inside rig, at this point it is the best available. For more information or to find a dealer stocking Alessi near you, write Alessi, 2465 Niagara Falls Blvd., Tonawanda, NY 14150, U.S.A.

* * * * *

1978 was the year of the Browning Centennial. John M. Browning is, as everyone involved however minutely with firearms knows, the inventor of the Colt 1911 Government .45, the Browning Automatic Rifle, the Browning .50 caliber heavy machine gun, the Browning .25, the Browning High Power, and numerous other firearms. He is the true genius of American gunmaking and one of the world's greatest and most prolific inventors.

His last design for a handgun is the High Power or Grande Puissance, known variously by these names or as the GP. Sometimes called the P-35, this comes from the year of its introduction.

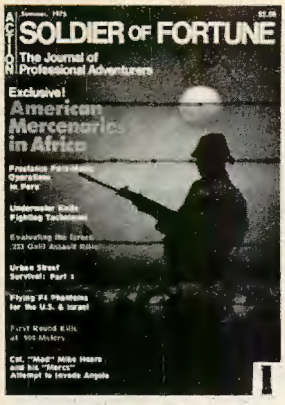
Browning considered the High Power an improvement over his successful .45, as used by U.S. forces, and in numerous respects it is.

The High Power has a solid muzzle, with no recoil spring plug, and an internal barrel bushing. A single action with revolver style trigger, it features a 13-round double-column magazine.

Interestingly, the P-35 was never popular here until after the last World War. Used by German forces after the capture of FN factories in Belgium, it became a natural GI war trophy. Used by Canadian forces and some British commando units, its efficacy was well regarded. The choice of most NATO nations, it is also the official British military sidearm.

For a number of reasons the 9mm Parabellum High Power is as good or better a choice than Browning's earlier invention, the Colt Government Model. Caliber disputes aside, 9mm ammo is more readily available worldwide because of its use as an SMG round. The greater magazine capacity is a plus in a firefight. The magazine safety, a possible detriment in a survival situation, is an asset for poorly or insufficiently trained troops who must handle the pistol.

Since the High Power's introduction to the U.S., numerous custom accessories



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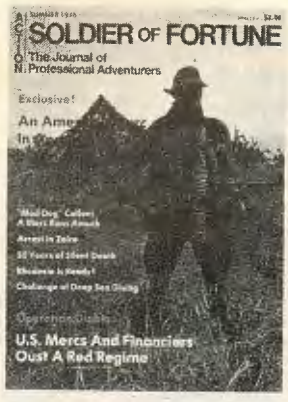

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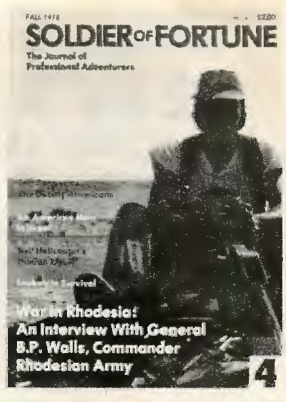
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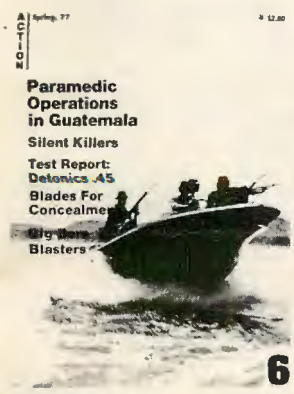

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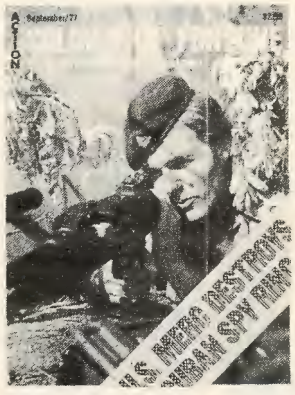

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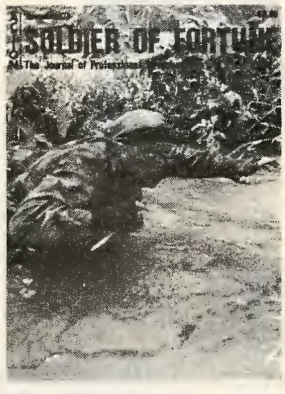

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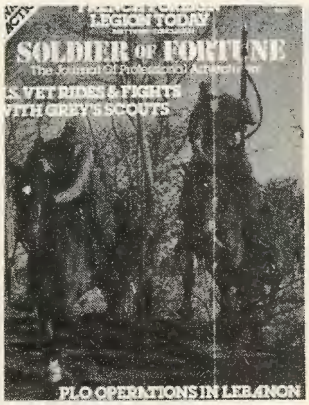

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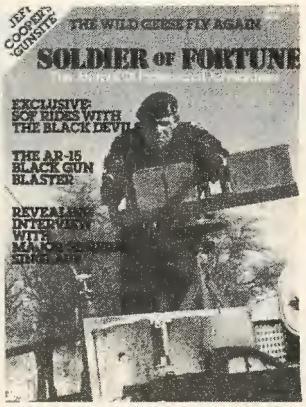

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have been made available. There are stainless steel barrels, Pachmayr Grips, speed safeties, combat sights, and accuracy jobs galore. Nearly as many gunsmiths specialize in the High Power as the .45. As the gun comes from the factory, it is highly reliable and perfectly serviceable with military ammo or conventional full metal case civilian loads. With a simple throating job, if necessary, feeding of hollow points is easily accomplished. When the magazine safety is de-activated, the trigger pull automatically smoothes and lightens. With a good quality protective finish, it is a lifetime pistol.

In the year of the Browning Centennial, Browning Arms has made available a limited edition of the High Power with all exterior surfaces in highly polished chrome. Rather than the usual French walnut grips, checkered grips with inset Browning medallions are installed. The gun, complete with fitted presentation case, is limited to 3500 copies.

For those requiring less flash—a gun to be used rather than revered and enjoyed—the standard blue finish Browning is available with fixed sights or with high profile lateral and horizontal deflection adjustable sights. In 43 years of rugged use, the High Power has come to enjoy an enviable reputation for quality and dependability. For more information, write Browning Arms, Route 1, Morgan, Utah 84050, U.S.A.

* * * * *

Tekna markets one of the smallest and most practical underwater flashlights available. SOF has already mentioned this ("The Man Behind Tekna, January 1979), describing its resistance to breakage. Not only is it durable, but the T-2000 uses two AA batteries, is 5.6 inches long, weighs 3.15 ounces (batteries included), and functions to a pressure-tested depth of 300 feet. The T-2000 has an ABS plastic body and polycarbonate lens. The Tekna-Lite II comes equipped with two bulbs, one standard and one a flasher which emits a 180-degree light. When used with alkaline Duracells, best results are obtained. The Tekna T-2000 is a twist-on light and because of this, reasonable care must be exercised when switching on and off underwater—care to protect the integrity of the "O" ring. Retail cost is around $10.00 and extra bulbs should be purchased for back-up. For a variety of underwater tasks, as well as conventional use, the Tekna T-2000 is worth investigating.

Since the inception of this column, we've covered numerous flashlights and light-signal devices. It would appear that, as with handguns, there is no one light perfectly suited for all situations. If the underwater applications and general utility meet the requirements of your situation, for more information write Tekna, 3549 Haven Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025, U.S.A.

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COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT
Jeff Cooper & Ken Hackathorn

SOF's Combat Pistolcraft column welcomes letters from our readers. If you have a good question or contribution, send it in to Jeff Cooper, care of Soldier of Fortune *Magazine, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. For a quick, personal reply, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.*

Q. First, I would like to tell you how pleased I was to find you writing for SOF Magazine. I also have a couple of questions.

Is there anything that you can tell me about the jacketed hollow points available for .45 ACP? I have been reloading with some of these, and I am wondering if they actually give any additional stopping power or if I would do better to load some lead round-nose bullets. Does the .45 move fast enough to expand this round?

I would also like to know anything you can tell me about the extended .45 ACP magazines. I've seen some magazines in 25-round capacity. My question is mainly in terms of operation. How can this long of a spring be able to hold up over a sustained period of firing? It also seems that it would be almost impossible to get the last few rounds in the magazine. I like the idea of this extended firepower capability, but I would rather have 10 seven-round clips that function every time.

Daniel Judd
Livermore, California

A. I have experimented with expanding bullets of various sorts for the .45 ACP for quite a long time. I am not convinced that we have very much of an advantage here. The .45 ACP hardball round is about 92 percent effective now and by changing its impact behavior we may be able to raise that figure to 95 or 96. However, to the extent that we do so, we reduce the available penetration of the piece, which is fairly low as it is. At this time, I am really more interested in development of an AP round with a bore diameter cutting shoulder, since body armor is beginning to filter down into the underculture.

Extension magazines for the .45 ACP have been available for many years. Usually they have not been very efficient due to the difficulty of constructing a constant-tension spring in a back yard. I am certainly not averse to development in this area, and I look forward to any improvements that may be presented. As you suggest, the tactical value of an extension magazine is somewhat moot, since a man who knows how to load the pistol can maintain continuity of fire almost without interruption.

Q. Re: Reduced size .45 cal. automatics vs. 9mm autos. I have recently encountered numerous advertisements for various substandard size .45 cal. autos, i.e., Safari "Enforcer," Detonics "Snubnose," Lichtman "LM4," etc. I have yet to see any honest, unbiased ballistics reports or any reports on the pros and cons of this specific class of weapons. Although I realize they are all relatively close-encounter weapons, a good deal of money can be spent pursuing a particular caliber pistol that is not either ideally suited to close-encounter situations and/or concealability and overall suitability in general. It is my uneducated opinion that, considering basic concealment, magazine capacity—for necessary multiple shots (because of darkness, inaccuracy, additional adversaries, etc.)—and recoil control for immediate second-shot recovery and aiming the 9mm auto could conceivably outweigh a .45 cal., if one were to disregard the stopping power of a .45 cal. With your experience, expertise, and overall judgment, could you perhaps endeavor to enlighten me in practical sense regarding this predicament that perplexes me presently. . . .

I am experienced with firearms and have owned various arms and sidearms since I was a child. I have never felt until recently a need for carrying one, although I have been licensed to carry them since 1964. I have always relied on my intelligence, maturity, sense of humor, and innate ability to negotiate and/or arbitrate tense or critical situations into reasonableness. Despite a reasonable degree of past success, I, however, recognize that these characteristics may not forever pull me through such circumstances and, in the event that such an eventuality might arise, I would

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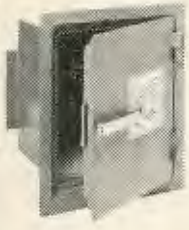

Masonry Wall Safe is designed for permanent installation in a masonry wall. The theft-resistant S-9 has a fully insulated 1-hour, fire-tested door and uninsulated steel body with four steel wall flanges. Door has a 3 number changeable combination lock and interior has a removable shelf. Sand color.

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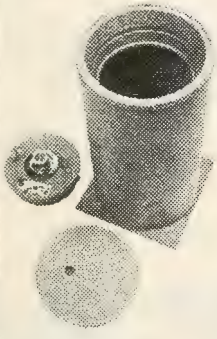
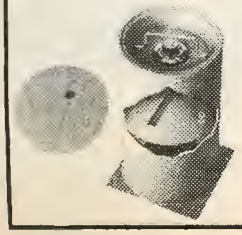
Outside 15¼"h x 12¼"w x 12"d
Inside 15"h x 12"w x 9"d
Shipping weight 45 lbs.
Model #S-9
PRICE $140.00



In-Floor Safe. Here is the ideal safe for overnight storage of cash and valuables. Installs easily in concrete block or concrete floors. Security features include steel wall construction and 9 in. sq. anchor base plate, 1¾ in. double-bolt door, built-in changeable 3-number combination lock, and protective steel door cover.

653 cu. in. capacity
Outside 8⅝" dia. 16¼" deep
Inside 8" dia. 13" deep
Shipping weight 40 lbs.
Model #S-2
PRICE $130.00

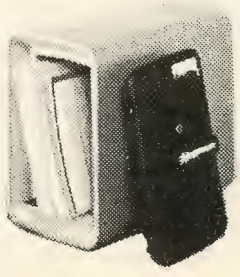


Same as S-2, but has an inner compartment that features a key lock and drop slot.

653 cu. in. capacity
Inside Top Compt. 5½" deep
Inside Bottom Compt. 6½" deep
Shipping weight 45 lbs.
Model #S-2-C
PRICE $160.00

The compact Model B-2 has ample room for storage or receipts, cancelled checks, and valuable records. It features a key lock, steel valuables tray, positive lid support, foot pads and side grips. This model carries the manufacturer's one hour fire label and has been fire tested up to 1700°F. Sand color.

855 cu. in. capacity
Outside 9¼"h x 16¼"w x 14¼"d
Inside 6"h x 13¼"w x 10¾"d
Shipping weight 48 lbs.
Model #B-2 — PRICE $76.00



Model S-V is the only record safe in its price range that withstands fires of 1700°F. for one hour. The 1¾ inch insulated walls have the fire resistant quality of over 2 feet of solid concrete.

Features include easy-access slide-out tray, key lock, double locking bolt and carrying handle.

537 cu. in. capacity.
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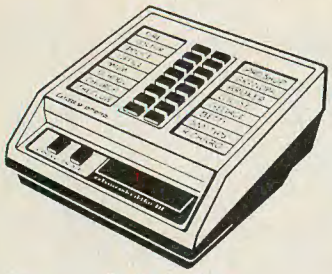

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be pleased to survive and continue living, as I am a young man and presently have no intention of giving up my enterprises or radically changing my lifestyle.

Recently, through apparent innocent circumstances over the last year, I have had various weapons, basically handguns, rudely directed with evil intent at various parts of my physical body. I have not been unduly upset, since the rogues basically made initial mistakes, but always there has been one or more assailants, and thus I was at a critical disadvantage, being confronted with more than one weapon at various close distances. To me, a weapon, regardless of what type, is absolutely a last resort only to be used for survival, but it can certainly be reassuring when you've been severely beaten physically and doubt your immediate personal survival or the assailants' intentions, and it would be quite personally satisfying to have made the right choice (regarding a weapon at this point in time).

Robert John Wood
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

A. The first requirement of a defensive sidearm is reliability.

Second is stopping power.

The third is controllability.

The fourth is wearability—comfort.

Not until now need we concern ourselves with magazine capacity.

Concealability is not a factor that can be objectively evaluated, as it depends on too many circumstantial considerations.

I will not willingly stake my life on the stopping power of the Parabellum cartridge, with any load.

Thanks for your interesting letter.

This month top-ranked combat pistol shooter Ken Hackathorn discusses belly gun conversions, pistol holsters, and a new European 9mm auto pistol. Hackathorn, a member of the five-man U.S. team at the 1977 South African combat pistol matches, has won first place honors in midwestern combat pistol league competition. His training includes the Smith & Wesson armored school and basic and advanced courses at Jeff Cooper's Pistol Institute. In the Army, Hackathorn taught light weaponry as a specialist-instructor for the Special Forces. His police work includes experience as a deputy sheriff and instruction of police firearms courses.

The current vogue in custom pistolsmithing is to chop down and modify service-style auto pistols to pocket-size blasters. Some of these designs are acceptable, but most are not. When a really good one comes along, it is nice to look it over and give it a test evaluation. Charles Kelsey, Devel Corp., 28749 Chargin Blvd., Cleveland, Ohio 44122, set out some years ago to design the ideal special purpose gun for concealed carry.

The majority of people who carry a concealed sidearm seem to have settled on medium bore handguns, usually in the form of either a two-inch .38 revolver or .380 auto pistol. The revolvers are not flat enough to hide well and give only moderate velocity out of the short barrel. High velocity is necessary to the lightweight hollow points that are needed to make these belly guns acceptable for use in a fight.

The small .380 autos are concealable, have good fire power and reload potential, yet lack on one critical area. The .380, even when loaded with H.P. ammo, just doesn't have the velocity to make those little pills expand on live tissue. Thus the .380 just punches neat little holes. Also, let us face the fact that most of the people that carry this type of small concealable handgun just can't control a larger caliber pistol. If they can hit with a medium bore, they should stick with it until they can master a real fight stopper.

With these facts in mind, Charles Kelsey came up with his "Devel" conversion. He took a stock M39 Smith & Wesson 9mmP. auto pistol and began his work. What resulted was a sidearm with functional qualities far superior to the standard two-inch .38 revolver or pocket .380 auto. The guidelines used to design such a pistol were: Improved reliability and function with no sacrifice in durability; compact size to facilitate concealment; light weight for ease of carrying on person; innovative features to enhance the effectiveness of the pistol as a short to mid-range weapon.

Continued on page 81

Below: Devel conversion of S&W M-39 Auto.

Below: Test firing the 9mm P. *Benelli* as produced in Italy.

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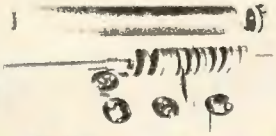

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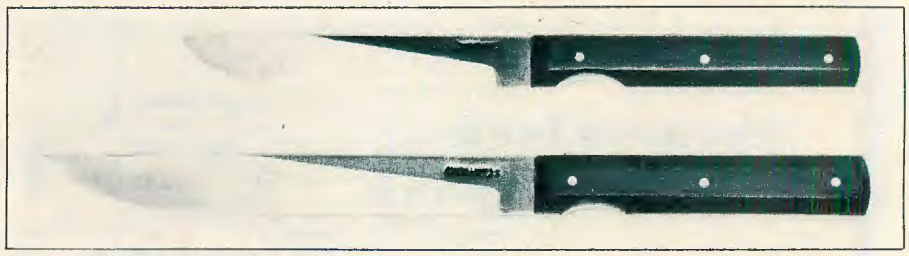
David E. Steele

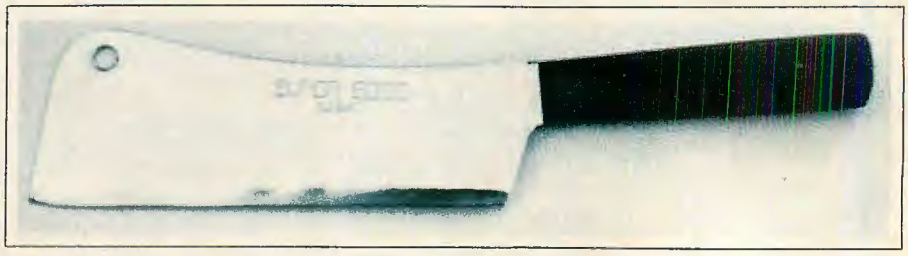
KITCHEN KNIVES FOR HOME DEFENSE

Articles on guns for home defense usually emphasize three things. Shotguns are best because of their intimidating appearance, high hit probability, more than adequate stopping power, and minimum danger of overpenetration. Handguns are quite portable, but are likely to have less than sufficient accuracy and stopping power. High power rifles are likely to be hazardous to your neighbors' health, especially in apartments or light frame houses where the danger of penetration through walls, floor, or ceiling is highly probable.

Above: An early J. A. Henckels chef's knife, with 10-inch high carbon steel blade. The stampings on the blade are: "J.A. Henckels Twinworks, Solingen, Germany. Grand Prize, Paris 1900, St. Louis 1904." A knife this size makes a formidable weapon if no firearms are available. In fact, this design is a direct descendent from the Mediterranean dagger of 200 years ago.



Above: The Model 10 "Salt Fisherman and Household Utility" filet and carving knife made by Randall. Shown are the 5-inch and 7-inch versions, with 440-C stainless steel blades and micarta handles. At $35 this is probably the biggest bargain in custom knife making.



Above: A World War II vintage American-made cleaver. The wood slab handles are traditional. The slender 7-inch blade is sharp as a knife and of suitable size for most household tasks. Such a device also makes a formidable weapon. The similar Chinese "chopper" is the favored weapon for mayhem in Hong Kong.

Although the chances for an individual householder having to defend his castle are remote, he should prepare for it as he might prepare for a jungle patrol. His primary weapon should be a shotgun, with sidearms for emergencies only when the shotgun is out of reach. One recent case illustrates the danger of depending on handguns. A householder shot a burglar three times with a .38 as his assailant rushed him with a knife; they died in each other's arms. Also, in some localities handguns are simply forbidden.

Girls and women count among the finest shotgun and rifle shooters in the country. For example, the current BB gun champion is a 14-year-old girl, one of our Olympic-caliber "riflepersons" is Cpt. Margaret Murdock of the U.S. Army . . . and the list goes on. But the average woman considers shooting unfeminine; if she has a gun it is likely to be a pistol she keeps but does not practice with. In at least some cases, she would be better off relying on a large kitchen knife with which she is completely familiar than a small handgun in which she may *not* have confidence for an emergency.

The homicide statistics in this country indicate that women favor the kitchen and the kitchen knife for their fatal work. From this we can extrapolate that women should also be able to use these knives for self-defense.

Basically, any kitchen knife, preferably those with a four-inch or longer blade, can be considered a potential weapon. In Hong Kong the favored weapon—because of restrictions on firearms ownership—is the kitchen chopper, a knife-edged cleaver. The housewife is best advised to decide in advance which knife she will pick up if confronted with assault in her home. Essentially, the bigger the better: a large chef's knife is a veritable short sword. It should have a very sharp point and edge. Its blade should not be too flexible: kitchen knife blades may be made in widths from 1/10 to 1/4 inch; the stouter ones are more valuable for thrusting.

Simply stated, the woman defending herself with a knife must have a repertory of three moves: handcut, evasive maneuver, and fatal thrust. If her opponent has not yet done anything for which he can be imprisoned, he is likely to be discouraged by a cut on the hand or arm. For example, a girl I knew was walking across a park in St. Louis. A man grabbed her arm. When she told him to let go and he refused, she drew a knife and cut his arm. Confronted with a situation which could only become more unpleasant, he left. Incidentally, this move should be combined with a suitable amount of screaming.

The second move is evasive maneuver. A woman must keep her assailant from wresting the knife from her grasp. This can be accomplished by fending him off with the other hand while keeping the knife back ready to slash at any exposed target.

The third move is only for circumstances of life or death. The thrust to throat or abdomen is more likely to be fatal than any slash (except to the carotid artery). For those interested in perfecting their skills in these matters the sport of fencing is the best practice.

Frankly, I have found that most of the unarmed techniques taught in YWCA and other self-defense courses do not take into account the size, speed, and pain threshold of the average woman compared to her probable assailant. In fact, men and women have always used weapons in order to compensate for the size advantage of potential opponents. Muggers and rapists are predators, not fighters; they choose their victims precisely for their apparent vulnerability. If the potential victim is to avoid becoming an actual victim, she must convey immediately the impression of self-assurance, and be ready to make noise, to run, or to fight. If she has a weapon she should draw it instantly, but keep it out of sight until the last moment, for the element of surprise.

A number of good factory kitchen knives, such as Gerber and Henckels, are available on the market today. For those who wish to go first class, custom knifemakers turn out some of the finest kitchen knives made anywhere. For example, Randall's Model 10 "Salt Fisherman/Household Utility" is probably the biggest bargain in custom knifemaking today; it can be had with a five or seven-inch blade with a choice of handle styles. Dan Dennehy's Model 14 "Chuckwagon" is another fine knife, though considerably more expensive than the Randall. Like most kitchen knives, neither of these has a guard or quillon; that is why they should not be used for some of the parries and beats which can be attempted with a traditional fighting knife.

The problem of home defense is a complex one. In fact, the use of guns or knives is the end of the road, the bottom line of home defense; all other means up to that point, such as locks and burglar alarms, must have failed. In such circumstances, the householder should be proficient in the use of any available weapon. In World War II, for example, the OSS used to train its agents to recognize practically anything as a potential weapon. To rely on firearms exclusively is to make oneself dependent on their presence.

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IN REVIEW

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR EXECUTIVE PROTECTION by Williams & Associates Security Consultants, 5310 East Pacific Place, Denver, Colorado, $5.95. Review by Dana Drenkowski.

A private investigating agency recently published the first of a two-volume work on security titled **Basic Guidelines for Executive Protection.** The first volume is addressed to the average person and contains many techniques and common-sense ideas for personal and family protection in these days of fear. The second volume is aimed at the security professional and the executive himself and it goes into more graphic detail about techniques of defense, including trade secrets. The second volume will be available only to security agencies, police departments, and certain corporate executives or their representatives.

The first volume, available to the general public, is broken down into four sections, including "Home and Family Section," "Office and Work Section," "Travel Section," and "Personal Protection." The Home and Family section contains information about such items as different types of door locks and their relative effectivenesses, types of fences and window grills that may be necessary in certain neighborhoods and similar information. Especially useful to the average citizen in this section are personal checklists for home and baby sitters. Sample questions for home inspection include: locks working properly, changing the locks or rekeying them since last tenant occupancy, checking locks for strength and suitability for the front entrance, rear entrance, garage doors, door between garage and residence, window locks, main floor, upstairs, basement, sliding glass patio doors (and so on for 18 questions, which should make one's home secure from all but the most professional of break-in artists). This section goes on to discuss in brief detail the technical aspects of various alarm systems, revealing no bias toward any one system, leaving the decision up to the user for that system he thinks will suit his needs. In fact, one of the real strengths of the first volume is the authors' ability to expose the reader to different systems and technical gadgetry without favoring any. Thus, the reader is free to make his or her own selection based on his perception of his or her personal needs.

The Offices and Work section is useful to any company, providing ideas for material security (anti-theft precautions) as well as for the physical protection of employees and employers. If adhered to, the guidelines will enable a company to provide security to its people, including the very vulnerable executives. Employee checklists for dealing with bomb threats, kidnap situations, and general threats are included, as well as suggestions on how to hire security personnel, and what type of training and instructions they should receive.

The Travel section brushes lightly over driving techniques (these are best learned in depth at a driving school) but goes into detail in the area of personal security while traveling in private aircraft, commercial transportation, or while walking or riding an elevator.

Finally, the Personal Protection section covers such areas as firearms selection, emphasizing the need to research local laws with an attorney or other qualified source (not necessarily the local police: most police men, including the heads of departments, do not know the laws they are supposed to enforce concerning firearms, and they will tend to give distorted or incomplete information to the citizen). In addition, the authors strongly advocate attendance at some firearms training school, using the firearm the individual has selected for his or her personal defense weapon. This section also covers bodyguard selection and training and the pros and cons of protective clothing (bullet-proof vests).

This manual is exactly what it claims to be: basic guidelines for protection. Its common-sense approach makes it applicable to anyone concerned about personal and family security today. The manual is well written, devoid of any extraneous information and verbiage, dealing with its subject in an emotionless, factual manner. I found it both readable and quite useful, and would recommend it as an addition to anyone's library.

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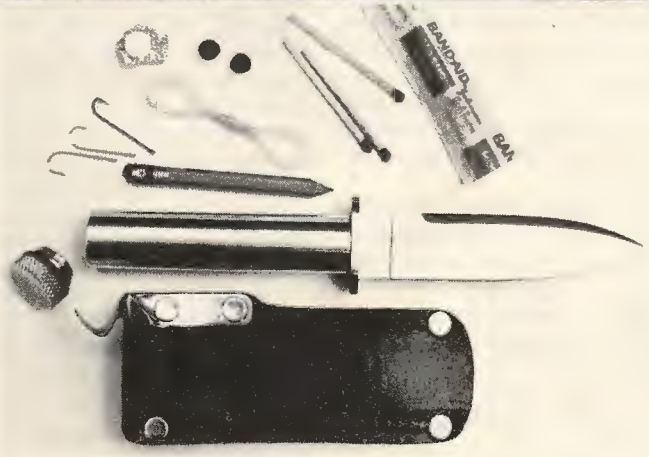

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MANTRACKING: Introduction to the Step-by-Step Method, compiled and edited by the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group from a training series presented by Albert Taylor and Jack Kearney of the U.S. Border Patrol, El Cajon, California, 1977, distributed by Search and Rescue Magazine, Box 153, Montrose, CA 91020. 101 pages, 33 photographs, 11 illustrations, paperbound. $8.95. Review by N.E. MacDougald.

Next to prostitution, wilderness tracking must rank as the oldest profession. **Mantracking**, a concise step-by-step manual, uses a systems approach to explain this ancient art/science. As a training manual, it is well organized, written in plain English, and uses case histories and illustrations effectively. Make no mistake, this is a cook book: it does not give the history of tracking, nor does it read like a Sherlock Holmes mystery. It is not fodder for the armchair adventurer, nor was it intended as such.

Mantracking's Introduction made me smile. Its authors show their nondogmatic colors at the onset. This attitude permeates the book and makes it live. From page xiii:

There are two hidden dangers in writing a book of this sort. The first is that whenever something is set in print, it takes on an aura of sanctity and finality. The written word is taken as the final authority. However, the art of tracking is not static and unchanging; new ideas and techniques are being tried continually. It is therefore hoped that this text will be used as a guide and not as a gospel.

Throughout the book, teamwork plays a key role. If you have a romantic notion of being the lone hero who tracks down a lost child, forget it. The Hollywood image of the intuitive scout is debunked and supplanted by a program of systematic skills that any junior high schooler can master.

As an SOF staffer, I was naturally interested in what counter-measures could be used to leave little or no trail. Unfortunately, no such data were included. However, countermeasures can be inferred by reading the book from the perspective of evasion.

The Table of Contents is reproduced because it gives a concise outline of topics covered:

3—The Step-by-Step-Method.
4—The Tracking Team.
5—Signs of Track.
6—Determining the Age of Tracks.
7—Light Conditions.
8—Nighttime Tracking.
9—Perimeter Cutting.
10—Classification of Footgear.
11—Interrogation.
12—Organizing the Search.
13—Training.
14—Class Histories.

If you are interested in wilderness tracking, this book is the only one I know that deals with it intelligently. Illustrations are germane and specific. A handy checklist is provided for tracking rehearsals.

Mantracking will not teach you the skills of tracking; no book can do that. If you have ever read a how-to book dealing with, say, skiing, technical rock climbing, or tennis, you know that concepts or basics can be learned from a text, little else. Hands-on experience is still the best instructor.

WAR STORY, By Jim Morris. Sycamore Island Books, P.O. Box 1307 Boulder, Colo. 80306. $12.95. Review by Barney Barco.

For those who have sat at innumerable bars, kitchen tables, and dull parties, the title gives you brilliant insight into what you are buying; **War Story** is exactly what it says. Set in Vietnam in the late '60s with a first-person account of a Special Forces Captain's trials and soul-searching experiences during three tours there, it starts with a flash-back that doesn't end until chapter 20. In this respect, Morris' style is hard to define; his use of the fiction writer's technique of *in medias res* (beginning in the middle and relating events vis flashback) for a non-fiction story makes the entire narrative rather disjointed.

There's no doubt that Morris was there, however, as veterans, especially Green Berets, who read this story will recall the frustrations of working with lackadaisical Vietnamese, the smells and customs of the Montagnard tribesmen, the sweat, gore, and gut-wrenching fear of close combat, and the stupid, sometimes maniacal handling of the war by our superiors.

Morris, in his simple, easy-going phraseology, says it for all of us while mourning the death of his close friend, Walt Swain, in the second chapter: "Some got it and some didn't, and knowing what you were doing didn't help that much. For surer 'n hell, if you knew what you were doing, either your commanding officer, or *his* commanding officer didn't."

It appears that Morris' one ambition in life is to command an "A" team. We are then directed to believe in his one great fear in life; that he'll be promoted to major and taken out of the field. Such philosophy and dedication to duty are admirable and, at times, one must really cheer him on as the under-dog. But time and again, Morris shows a somewhat tenuous grasp on reality. For example, in chapter 18, after pointing out that the Nungs he was patrolling with were pros, and among the elite, with good fire discipline, he takes three more pages to decide that this particular operation, "with the dizzy band of unfortunates which I had been provided, was impossible!" To drive the point home, "there had to be a way to build a fire under these sleazy little creeps."

Continued on page 83

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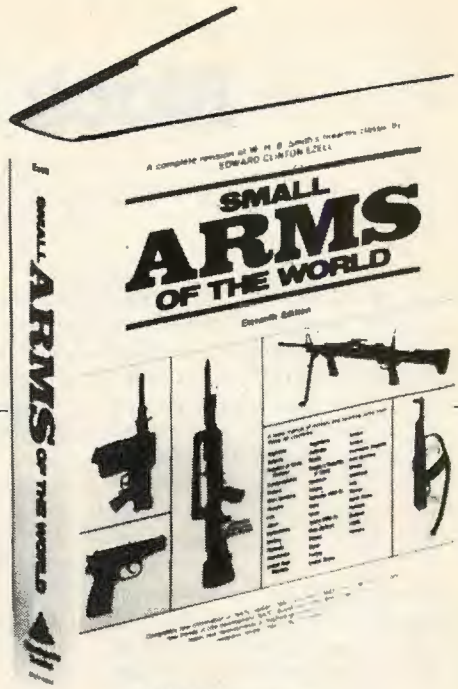

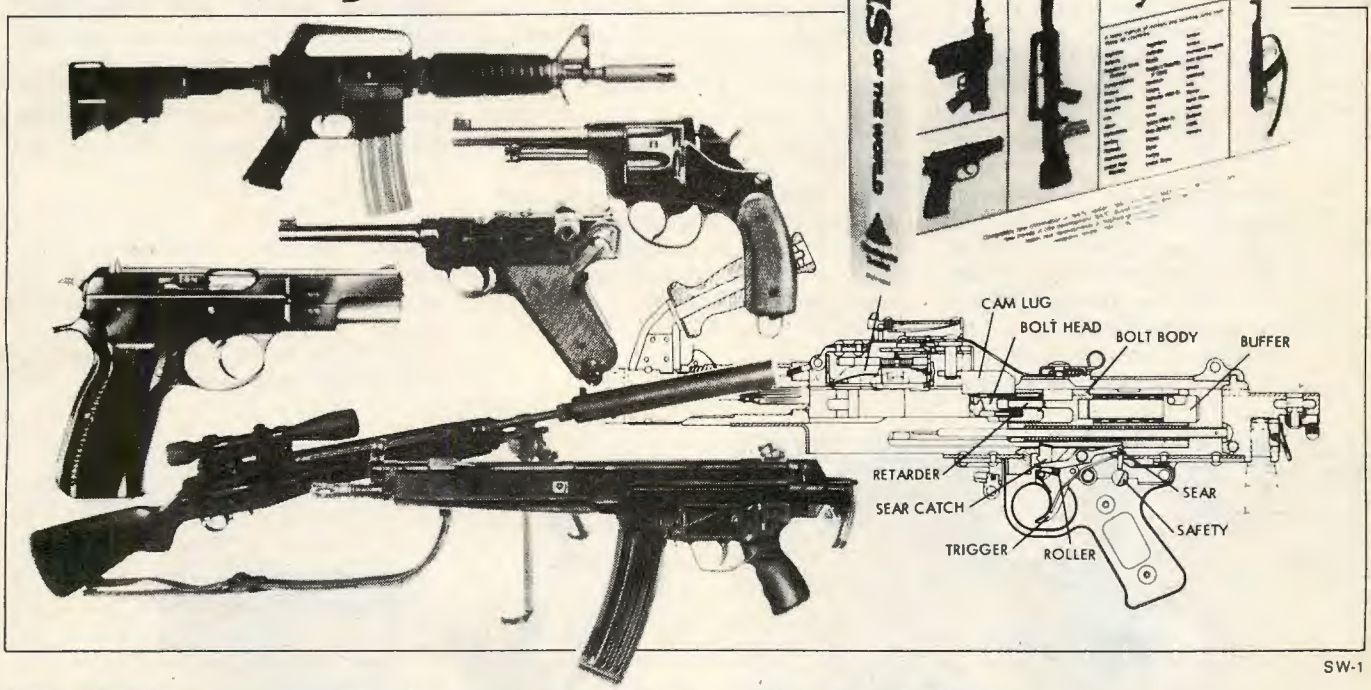

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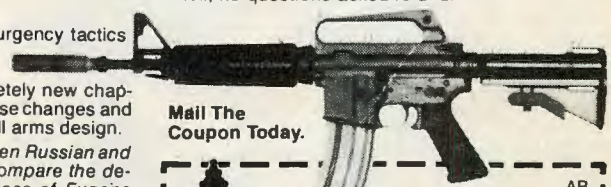

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Along The Angolan Border

Black Against Black

by Al J. Venter

In those parts of Southern Africa and Southwest Africa (soon to be known as Namibia) increasing numbers of black soldiers are being involved in hostilities against a largely communist-backed enemy. In Rhodesia, the Rhodesian African Rifles and blacks attached to specialist units such as Rhodesian Light Infantry and Selous Scouts have long played a prominent counter-insurgency role.

More recently, with the escalation of war along the southern fringe of Angola, South African forces opposed to Cuban and East German-led Swapo troops have included more and more African soldiers.

The step—for South Africa, at any rate —was a momentous one, for there were many objections about putting guns in the hands of African people. It was argued that these same black troops could eventually turn against their white officers.

But it has never happened yet in almost two decades of guerrilla warfare in Africa. The Portuguese used legions of black soldiers in all three of their theaters of war—Guine-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique. The Rhodesians are still using them; and now the South Africans. In fact, what has happened, on occasion, is the reverse; the black enemy has often turned (as they are now doing in small groups in Rhodesia) and sworn fealty to their former white enemy.

SOF staffer, Al J. Venter, recently spent a week on ops with the Ovambo Battalion, recognized as one of the crackest black fighting units along this embattled frontier with Independent Africa. He went out several times with these units; often only one of two or three Europeans among almost 100 black troops. He found the black-white relationship fascinating. This is his report:

South African Army Major Willie Snyders will never forget that day. He will, in fact, remember it for the rest of his life. Because that was the day he stared death in the face—and lived to describe the experience.

Above: The face of the modern Swapo terrorist — captured in a skirmish by Ovambo troops. For the sake of the picture he was dressed in his original uniform. At his knee on the ground lies a Russian infra-red light.

Above: Black Ovambo soldier on parade shortly before going out on patrol.

Above: A trooper of the Ovambo Battalion takes aim with South African manufactured FN.

"It was hot. Damn hot. We knew there were terrorists in the vicinity because the Int boys had said there were.

"I had ordered my men to spread out in the bush in anticipation of a contact. We were very close to the border: the cutline—that one-kilometer-wide strip of no-man's land separating Southwest Africa from Angola—was only a short distance away."

Major Snyders' men had sighted several civilians moving about the area. "Nothing to worry about, I thought at the time; just local "pops" going about their business." In Snyders' jargon he was referring to the local population.

"So when I spotted one of the civvies coming down the path with a red bundle under his arm I didn't take too much notice. But I should have!

"Out of the corner of my eye I could see the man come closer, but still I did not register. To me, at that moment, he was a local. Nothing else. And in any event I had other things on my mind."

The black man was perhaps two meters from Major Snyders when he suddenly opened his red bundle and pulled out a pistol. The South African immediately recognized it. It was a Soviet-made 7.62 Tokarev pistol. And it was cocked.

"Everything started to move in slow-motion for me," he recalls, his animated features acting out the events as though it had only just happened. "The man, obviously a terrorist, leaned forward until his outstretched hand was barely a meter from my chest.

"I could see the movement as his finger tightened on the trigger and all I had time to do was lift my FN rifle across my body to try and shield myself from the inevitable."

The blast stung his face almost as much as the impact of the bullet against his rifle. The bullet, moving at 420 meters a second, hit the plastic grip between two of his fingers, shattering part of the weapon and rendering it immediately inoperable.

"The man still kept coming, and my gun was useless to me now. I threw myself sideways on to the ground and away from my attacker."

Two more shots rang out to shatter the silence of late afternoon. Both bullets missed Major Snyders' head by centimeters. Sand stung his face and blinded his eyes as he lay there, momentarily stunned.

But the immediate danger was over. Several of his men had come running towards the sound of gunfire and the terrorist slipped neatly into a nearby thicket.

"That was the last we ever saw of the bastard," says Snyders ruefully, "he was there one moment, and then he disappeared." The bush was thick in that area.

"For a little while I was too shocked to comprehend what had happened. My head rang from the blasts and my hand hurt. I could see that the impact of the bullet between my fingers had opened a small wound on my index finger. But that was all."

Since that incident something of a legend has grown up around Major Willie Snyders, the 30-year old commander of Southwest Africa's elite black force: the Ovambo Battalion. Few men escape with their lives after being shot at from point-blank range.

By the law of averages he should have been a casualty; a candidate for a case-vac. Or dead. But he wasn't. Apart from the slight finger wound, he was unhurt. And Snyders can still remember how his black soldiers crowded around him and gasped in amazement at his miraculous escape from death.

Major Snyders' reputation for invincibility was further enhanced when he and his black unit were later caught in a heavy crossfire in the same area. There was no time to prepare defenses; they had to fight it out in the bush country with a fairly large terrorist patrol.

Below: Ovambo troops recruited by South African Army are quick to learn and aggressive.

Above: White officer attached to the unit explains details of a patrol shortly before going out.

Above: Major Willie Snyders explains a tactic to one of his section leaders while on ops. In the bush the men rarely speak but use hand signals.

Major Snyders and one of his soldiers attracted a considerable volume of fire; all they could do was lie low and retaliate as best they could. The African next to him took a wound in the shoulder but the Major once again emerged unscathed from the firefight. And this was despite the fact that both men had come under savage and continuous fire from an LPD machine-gun nest. The reason for such unwelcome attention was because the terrorists had heard Snyders issuing instructions. He immediately became the prime target as it is insurgent policy in Africa to try to knock out the officers first.

One of the results of this incident has been a considerable amount of jockeying for position among his soldiers whenever Snyders takes a patrol out. The men take turns to walk next to "their Major" or spend a night in an ambush bivouac with him.

The Ovambo Battalion commanded by Major Willie Snyders was formed in Southwest Africa as a direct consequence of developments in Angola after 1974. At that time some of the Ovambo people (the northernmost tribe of this region) wanted to get involved with the ongoing war north of their border, but at that stage there were no facilities to assimilate them into any fighting force. In its present form the Battalion has existed since early 1977.

The unit is based on an infantry configuration; much of the time the men move on foot. Their armament consists of standard infantry weapons, including automatic and semi-automatic small arms backed by mortar and rocket fire when the occasion demands it. In the words of their leader, the Ovambo Battalion includes "some of the best fighters operational in Southwest Africa."

Major Snyders, who once played rugby on a national basis—several times against foreign touring teams—has been with the unit from the start. During this time he has supervised all aspects of training, including mortar drill, signalling, machine-gun techniques, as well as some of the more esoteric aspects that need to be assimilated by the black section leaders who are responsible directly to the unit's white officers.

Below: Ovambo troops lay down a curtain of fire near the Angolan frontier.

Above: Ambush position taken up at short notice while on patrol; something had been spotted and it could have been the enemy. It was not.

The Ovambo Battalion has been in the hot seat for most of the time it has been operational. Contact with terrorists is frequent and often intense.

And they don't do it for money either. The average Ovambo soldier receives about $150 a month—a good salary by African standards.

At the time of my visit—none of the black soldiers had been killed in action, although several had been wounded. A white officer attached to the Battalion, Lt. Kurt Gagiano of Tsumeb, was killed in action shortly before last Christmas.

These low casualty figures are surprising. Prior to my visit the Battalion had been involved in no less than nine scrapes with Swapo units in a single week.

Says Major Snyders: "These men are aggressive. Many of them know no fear and their over-exuberance will at times make them stand up during a firefight and shout abuse at the enemy. After all, many of the terrorists are also of Ovambo origin.

"Their endurance is incredible. Once they are on to a track they stop at nothing until they can force a contact. Even more important, their bushcraft is amazingly good. I have personally been on to a hot track and have kept following it with them pointing out the trail at more than six kilometers an hour on hard, dry ground."

There are several other ways in which the men of the Ovambo Battalion differ from their white counterparts. Major Snyders points out, for example, that these black troops are far less susceptible to pain than he would be.

Below: One of the dead Swapo terrs killed by the Ovambo Battalion — brought into base for identification. Some of the white officers and NCOs stand by.

"I've seen one of these fellows take a bullet through the arm—it shattered the bone. Yet, he went on firing throughout the contact. Another of my men was shot through the shoulder and he kept on hitting at the enemy until they withdrew.

"And they don't need regular breaks to change the monotony. I take them into the bush for a month at a stretch and there are no complaints. They're top-flight in all COIN ops."

Major Snyders emphasizes that the demands made on his white officers were far more stringent than normally expected of an operational unit. The officer had to direct every move by example, "like the Israelis, almost," he told me.

"So it's no use standing at the back and giving directions. If you want to hit at any enemy position, *you* lead the way.

"And, make no mistake, they will be there right behind you. They've never let any one of us down. Nor will they ever do so.

"On that I'm prepared to stake my career. And my life."

With Special Forces In Nha Trang, Tet '68

The Straphangers War

by Jim Morris

Jim Morris, a graduate of the University of Oklahoma's professional writing curriculum, served three tours of duty with the U.S. Army Special Forces in Vietnam. In 1963, he received a disability retirement from the Army in the grade of Major. For his service in Vietnam, Morris was awarded the Bronze Star with three oak leaf clusters, two for valor; the Purple Heart with three oak leaf clusters; the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, with Bronze Star; the Combat Infantryman's Badge; and the Master Parachutist Badge.

This article on Tet '68 is a chapter from Morris's new book, War Story, *a personal narrative of his three tours in Vietnam.*

There was a rumor circulating around that the V.C. had something planned for Tet, but I didn't take a lot of stock in it. I figured that the Tet holiday was so sacred to the majority of Vietnamese that it would be psychologically bad for them to try anything then. Maybe they'd hit a couple of towns, but I didn't figure it would be anything much.

Everybody was looking forward to Tet that year. The Viets put half the ARVN on leave. They figured about the same as I did, that it would be bad for the Cong to try something at that time.

It was really a great holiday while it lasted. The night before the Tet offensive, I went to a banquet.

Leaving about ten-thirty, full and happy at having seen something work right in Vietnam, I undressed and slept the sleep of the just.

For about four hours. At six I was awakened by Frank Orians in green fatigues and beret, but with rifle and patrol harness. He looked eager and happy.

"Say, there's a little fight going on downtown. I heard there was a company of Mike Force down there against maybe two companies of NVA. What say we get some cameras and go down and see if there's a story in it."

I sat up, really still too tired to think well.

"Yeah, yeah," I muttered. "Okay, but there better be some war down there if you're going to get me up this early."

By the time I had my fatigues on, Frank was back with the jeep. I had a half-frame 35mm camera in one pocket of my BAR belt, something I had carried ever since becoming PIO. The half-frame was plenty good enough for me; I am one of the world's worst photographers. I stomped out of my hooch, feeling crabby, sure we were off on a wild goose chase.

Two extremely mean looking sergeants from C and C came up and asked expectantly if they could go too, and I began to think there might be something to it. We said sure and they got in the jeep with us. As we drove out the compound gate I heard them jack back their bolts, just like you would on a combat patrol. The air was very still and it was too quiet for a great national holiday. A little trickle of apprehension slid up my back and I jacked my bolt back too. Frank turned the jeep toward downtown and it all seemed very strange to me to be heading for a fight down the same road I had returned on the night before after a gourmet dinner and theatrical review.

The drive downtown was uneventful except that halfway there a little kid

threw a string of firecrackers and the sergeant sitting beside me whirled to fire.

"Steady!" I muttered and he didn't shoot. The kid had been an ace from being shattered by M-16 fire.

It was about four blocks past where the kid had thrown the firecrackers to the prison. It looked different in the daytime, more grim with concertina wire on top of the red stone wall. The guard out front was a little more alert. He drew down on us with his carbine, then looked sheepish and put it away.

I grinned and waved at him as we parked the jeep. There were four of us, Frank and myself and the two sergeants we had picked up.

That's one of the nice things about working with professionals. There was no talking. We simply spread out 10 yards between men, on both sides of the road, took our weapons off safety, and started moving slowly down the road in the manner infantrymen have always adopted when moving into a fight. Slow.

We didn't have to talk about who went where, either. The junior sergeant automatically took the point, and I slid in behind him, with Frank on the other side of the street to my left. If a situation came where an order had to be given I would give it. I did not anticipate such an eventuality. If we were fired upon we would take cover and return fire. If we could take them we would and, if not, we would withdraw. When you work with professionals you don't have to choose up sides and argue about who's in charge.

We moved soundlessly down the street with our rifles at the ready, on full auto. There was the sporadic sound of automatic weapons fire up ahead and the occasional crump — crump of a 60mm mortar. Two blocks down the street there was an American 2½-ton truck stopped with a number of regularly spaced bullet holes in it, neat little indentations with ragged edges, exposing a bit of gray metal. There was also a corpse in the middle of the street, with civilian clothes on and an NVA haircut.

Looking around, I could see we had come into a small ARVN compound. There were a couple of guard gates around us and the buildings were set up for offices, rather than dwellings. Also there were some scared looking uniformed Vietnamese crouched against the walls. I caught a few glimpses of Mike Force tiger suits on guys tucked into the firing position here and there and the air was deadly still. I began to feel as though we were not in the right place, there in the road.

There was a burst from a machine gun somewhere and then the dirt did its little John Wayne number, just like in *Sands of Iwo Jima,* where it kicks up in a regularly spaced and timed series of spurts. We ran for the safety of the buildings, like striped-assed gazelles.

I slid to a stop beside Captain Larry O'Neal, the commander of the Nha Trang Mike Force, who looked exactly like what you'd expect somebody in that job, with that name, to look like, except he wore glasses.

He grinned. "Ah, *Turistas!*"

I popped out my camera, took his picture, and said, "What's the story, Larry?"

The situation, as he explained it to me, was that a sizable enemy force had hit this compound about two in the morning and when the little ARVN Signal Compound couldn't handle it they called for reinforcements. He had been sent down to help out and had been here ever since. He was pinned down and couldn't move against the enemy, which he estimated to be at least two companies. The enemy hadn't been able to budge him either.

He pointed up over a fence to a two-story house on the other side, across a brief space of rice paddy.

"See that house over there?"

I nodded.

"Got two machine guns in it. We been trying to knock them out all morning without any success!"

As he spoke, one of his Mike Force strikers bobbed up from behind a Renault sedan which someone had made the error of parking in the line of fire of the machine guns. It had been carefully covered over with a canvas tonneau cover. It was, of course, riddled with bullet holes and all four tires were flat. The kid, who had turned his helmet around backwards to aim better, bobbed up and ponked out an M-79 round and then ducked back down. It seemed like a good hit to me, just below the window where one of the machine guns was. But it was answered by a burst of fire from the window. They must have sandbagged the guns in. That had taken a lot of time to prepare.

The firing picked up now and all of us straphangers, easily identifiable because we wore starched fatigues and berets, got in on it. None of us had been involved in city fighting before and we soon found that there were a lot of tricks to it. For instance, if you were behind certain walls you were absolutely safe, but if you took one step around the corner you were absolutely exposed.

Only you had to go around the corners to change position, and you had to go around the corners to fire back at the enemy. So you adopted a kind of slow-fast way of doing things. I sat in a doorway on the front side of the Signal Compound for quite a while, smoking a cigaret. I had given up smoking then decided, what the fuck. In Vietnam I wasn't particularly worried about lung cancer. So I sat there and listened to the firing and took some pictures, but after a few minutes I exhausted the picture-taking possibilities of that particular little nook and got up to move around.

There was a little alley between two buildings and it was under observation. Every time anybody moved in that alley he got shot at. So you had to do it fast. I blasted across it and took some more pictures. I got a good one of Larry O'Neal firing around the corner. I kind of dug it because the heat from the muzzle blast from his CAR-15 caused the paint to blister off the side of the building, so that he was firing through a little snowstorm.

We were pouring a lot of fire out into the houses surrounding the signal compound, so occasionally some Vietnamese civilians would come out and get caught in the cross-fire.

This is the kind of thing that pisses me off about the press. Every time a civilian showed up, everybody in the compound stopped firing. And when we quit all the NVA popped up and opened up on us, and, of course, on the civilians we had stopped firing to protect. I got one shot of Sammy Coutts, a sergeant from the Mike Force, running square out in the middle of the street to scoop up a little Vietnamese girl who was standing there in fright and confusion. Sam scooped her up and ran with her to safety through the literal hail of bullets you read so much about.

Most people in the States believe that the American Army went through Vietnam in a storm of atrocities. Maybe some did, but I never personally saw any of it, other than some pretty intense POW interrogations. And I heard the view advanced that Special Forces were the worst of any at atrocities. Actually, the reverse is true. We lived with the Viets and the Yards and certainly we didn't think of them as ciphers. Amateurs are the ones who, frightened by a little gunfire, turn to atrocities. These kinds of assholes shouldn't be allowed in a war anyway. They give it a bad name.

Sammy Coutts wasn't the only American I saw risk his life to save a civilian that day either. It was a common occurrence. One of my own sergeants did it repeatedly. I won't name this sergeant, because he was the lousiest PIO man I ever came across, but that day he turned to and did damned fine as a line sergeant. If I ever die and go to heaven and they give me an "A" team, he could be my team sergeant any time. But to turn him loose with a magazine lay-out. No way!

Frank and I hung around for a couple of hours shooting pictures and people and then I sprinted across the alley again and tapped him on the shoulder.

"You know, Frank," I said, "this is a lot of fun and all that, but we do have to get back and get a story out on this. They pay us too much to function as grunts."

He gave me a look that said, "Spoilsport," and muttered assent.

O'Neal was crouching and moving and so I called to him and said, "Hate to shoot and run, Larry, but we gotta get back to work." I kept doing the flip dialog, feeling loose and happy in the fight.

He waved, "Sure, I understand."

I checked with the sergeants, but it was Saturday, as I recall, and none of them had to be anyplace special so they elected to stay and fight.

Frank and I sort of d-d-dodged out of the area where the gunfire was and went back to the jeep. It took us a few minutes to return to the shop. We gave our film to Fred Fawcett, the lab man, to develop and I went into my office to work on a story. It didn't take long to write and the pictures came out fast so we sent Fawcett on an airplane to Saigon to get clearance so we could get the stuff out. I figured it would be a really good story.

Unfortunately, by the time he got to Saigon, the Tet offensive had started there too, so he was bottled up in town for five days and never did get out to Long Binh to get it cleared. If I had known that, I would have had him give the stuff to a reporter to send out under a wire service by-line, but Fred didn't call and so it never appeared anywhere but in our little magazine.

I had just about finished writing the story when the phone rang. I snatched it off the hook and said, "Captain Morris," in my best authoritative manner.

A dim voice was on the other end, bellowing, but I could barely hear it. "Jim?"

"Yeah!"

"Jim, this is Sy Wohlen, of CBS. I understand you guys got a fight there."

"That's right!"

"I'm gonna have a camera crew in to Nha Trang in half an hour. Can you pick them up?"

"Sure, Sy, no problem."

"Good! Good!"

I hung the phone up smiling. "Hey, Frank!"

Old broken-nosed Orians poked his head around the door.

"We got to go back to the war, Frank. Sy Wohlen's sending a camera crew in. Send Dusty down to pick them up and we'll meet them at the compound. Then we'll get a little lunch and go on down."

He was off and running.

I stepped down the stairs and strolled over toward headquarters to fill in my colonel on what was going on down there. Just as I was going in the door, Lieutenant Gordon, the assistant adjutant, came out. Gordon was a very good man, having been an admin clerk in George Dunaway's empire on Okinawa. He had gone to OCS, got shot at enough to get his CIB, and then been scooped back up into headquarters. They're gonna keep doing that to Gordon for the rest of his life. He's a good combat man, but there are a lot of those and not very many good administrators.

"Colonel in?" I asked.

He shook his head. "Nope! There's too much going on. Where you guys been?"

I told him about the fight at the Signal Compound and he nodded sadly, unhappy to have to be watching the store.

"You hear what happened downtown?"

I said, "Huh, uh," and he told me.

"Bastards came up on the beach last night and hit the province headquarters. A bunch of them marched in a column of twos right past the MP compound. The MPs thought they were a bunch of drunk ARVNs until they started lobbing grenades over the wall."

Having the war nearby seemed to have changed the very air. It felt thinner, and the compound seemed almost empty. But the air was so still, quiet, exactly like the calm before a storm. It's funny how one sometimes falls back on cliches, but then certain expressions become cliches because they are so apt.

As Gordon left, I wandered over to the club for lunch. The air in there was very silent too. The dining room was about half empty, and the men who were there sat beefily under their crewcuts, slipping into a pre-combat glower.

I had a very small appetite. I was getting a solid adrenalin rush prior to going back downtown and wasn't hungry at all. I figured that I should eat something though and got down half my meat and salad. Then I picked my teeth as I strolled back to the office. Frank was all set to go when I got there and so we got in the jeep and went.

When we got back downtown the situation had changed. Everything seemed quiet. Scotty was standing in the middle of the street talking to Carl McCarden.

"What's going on?" I asked.

"We went around to the left through the paddies with those two Mike Force companies twice," he said. "But we couldn't make any headway either time. Had to go through too much of an open area."

I nodded. "Seems pretty quiet now though."

He nodded again.

"Whatcha gonna do now?"

"We're gonna soften them up a little bit. The idea is that we'll call in gunships to make one pass. Then I'll get on the loudspeaker. This is a signal compound and we can use their equipment and we'll tell the civilians to come out. Then we'll make another pass and this time the civilians will believe us and come out. Then we'll level the fucking place."

I thought for a moment about the fact that this was a residential area and there were a lot of people in it. Some of them were going to be killed, and there is nothing you or I or anybody else in the world can do about it. I nodded.

A couple of Viets ran up and handed Scotty the hand mike to do the announcing on. Scotty never claimed his Vietnamese was the best, but it was serviceable for what he intended. He called out to the Vietnamese to come out of the area where they lived. Then there was a long pause in all shooting and there was a thin trickle of civilians who tried to come through our lines. I supposed a good many others got out the other three sides of the box they were in. We waited for about five minutes. Then the trickle stopped. Their eagerness was restrained by the fact that as they departed the NVA shot at them, hitting quite a few. There were a lot of bloody civilians when they came through to us.

Frank tapped me on the shoulder. "You need me?"

"Huh uh!" He nodded and went over to the medics. Frank had been a medic before he went to OCS and there were plenty of officers around, but not nearly enough medics to handle the number of wounded civilians.

There were several Hueys whopping around in the sky above us, and I could see rocket pods under some of them. Gunships. Scotty spoke into the radio that

the little signal corps major who was advisor to this ARVN unit had loaned him. The major was a chubby little fellow, who was scared as hell. Since he knew nothing about combat operations he left the whole thing to Scotty, who had assumed command earlier when Larry O'Neal and some of the Mike Force had pulled out. Carl and I both outranked him, but he had assumed command when he was the ranking man and date of rank was far too petty a thing to worry about at a time like this. Besides, I had a PIO job to do and Carl was going back to the SF compound.

The gunships in the air whirled and came down at an angle, much flatter than a conventional ship. They looked like dragonflies in line, or like old WW I fighters, except for the whirling blades above them going *whocka whocka whocka* as they dived and one after another released their rockets which crashed into the houses on the other side of the line that the edge of the signal compound had become.

Crack-whooooooosh — Blam! Crack-whooooooooooosh-Blam! Crack-whoooo-ooosh-blam! Then they lifted back up and flew away.

Scotty handed the mike back to a Vietnamese lieutenant, who spoke into it again. A few minutes later, twice as many civilians as before poured out of the housing area. Again the NVA shot them as they came.

It was a funny thing, all day the firing had been going north and south and over to the west was a rice paddy. But I could look down between the rows of houses on our east. A large crowd of Vietnamese civilians had collected to watch the battle. They had started gathering that morning and now I could see soup vendors pushing their little carts through the crowd, and I surmised they were waiting to see which side won before making up their minds who they supported. There were no pennants.

Then Scotty got back on the radio and the gunships made another pass.

About that time Dusty Hobbs arrived in a three-quarter with the CBS crew in the back. They were Don Webster, a heavy, black-haired man, and a little skinny guy named John Smith on camera. The sound man was a Vietnamese and I never did catch his name. He seemed damned efficient though.

They bounced off the truck and Don came up and asked me what was going on. Smith started to shoot and Webster stuck the mike in my face.

"Hold it," I said. "You want somebody more photogenic and better spoken than me to do this. Hey, Carl."

McCarden came over and I introduced him to Webster. "Carl's been here all day," I said. "He can explain it fine." Carl didn't have on a patrol harness. He had on clean, starched fatigues with maybe a couple of magazines shoved in the side pockets. He did have his rifle, though. I took off my patrol harness and draped it over his shoulders.

"Put this on and look fierce," I said.

While they were doing that I went over and zinged a few more rounds in on those two machine guns that were still active in the house across the paddy.

The CBS camera crew hung around for about an hour, taking pictures of Mike Force machinegun crews shooting off into the air at nonexistent targets and recording rat-a-tats for the sound track. Then they went away. I was kind of disappointed that they weren't there for any of the real action.

A couple of weeks later, I was up in Da Nang to set up a press conference for the survivors of Lang Vei and I ran into Don and John Smith at the airport. He said the Nha Trang footage was some of

the best stuff to come out of Tet, but it didn't make the Cronkite show because of a bad plane connection in Tokyo. It made the 11 o'clock news that night, and the CBS morning news.

The last of the Mike Force was pulled out shortly after the CBS crew left. We were going to leave too, except the little signal corps major pointed out that with the Mike Force gone he only had about 20 guys to hold the compound against whatever it was we were facing.

So we elected to stay. By that time "we" consisted of almost my entire PIO section, and the goddamnedest collection of clerks, cooks, and guys who were just passing through Nha Trang you ever saw. They were all Special Forces guys, of course. Not a leg in the bunch. There were about 30 of us in all. The clerks had volunteered for jump training, volunteered for the Forces, and volunteered for Nam. Then somebody found out they could type and they had got trapped in Nha Trang. This was probably going to be the only fight they got into their entire year in 'Nam and they were just like a bunch of junkies waiting around for a connection.

There was sporadic sniping going on and we were still pouring it out. I suddenly realized I was down to about two magazines.

"Hey, Scotty," I called. "Where's the M-16 ammo?"

"We're about out," he called back.

"You got any radio contact with the headquarters?"

He shook his head. "See if you can get somebody on the phone."

I went into the office of the Vietnamese signal unit and picked up the phone. Miraculously I got a dial tone. They didn't have a phone book and the only number I could think of was the adjutant's office. I called that and got another assistant adjutant on the line, not Gordon. This one was a captain and just as officious as the asshole he worked for.

"Where are you?" he demanded.

"I'm at the Vietnamese signal compound. We're almost out of ammo. Can you call the ammo dump for me and have some sent down?"

"Who authorized you to go down there?" he demanded.

"Nobody authorized it. I came down here to cover a story, and if we leave now these guys are going to be overrun."

"We've got a compound of our own to defend," he said. "You better get your men and come back here, before you get into trouble."

I thought about pointing out that they had to go through us to get to him, but decided it wasn't worth the trouble.

"We can't leave now," I said, "and we need that ammo bad. Will you call the ammo dump for us?"

"No," he replied, "I can't condone this unauthorized . . ."

"Listen, you howling, fucking idiot..."

There was another crack-*whoooosh*-BLAM and the phone went dead.

I went outside to tell Scotty what the story was.

"That's just swell," he said.

Frank was bandaging the leg of an old Vietnamese lady nearby. He looked up as we talked.

"Listen," he said, "I've got a bunch of wounded that I need to take to the province hospital. What say I take a deuce and a half and swing by the ammo dump after I drop them off?"

"Sounds okay to me," I agreed and looked at Scotty. He was in charge and the decision would be up to him.

"Do it!" he said and went to worry about something else.

I worked pretty much as a grunt all night long. There was nothing for me to be in charge of, and I was having the time

Continued on page 83

Sports West: Custom Gunsmiths Who Provide You With What You Need As Well As What You Want-Quickly & Economically!

A Dynamite Combat Custom 45 Auto

by Chuck Taylor

Over the years, a number of custom .45 auto 'smiths have made a lot of money customizing people's guns, building special combinations, and repairing weapons. Most of these individuals are competent and do at least acceptable work.

The big problem, at least from the gun-owner's standpoint, is that the gunsmith keeps his gun for anywhere from six months to two years! This, obviously, is most unsatisfactory, and really should not exist. When a good 'smith becomes known, and consequently receives an increased workload from the public, his customer service—and most of the time, customer relations—tend to degenerate, further irritating the customer who has saved his bread for a long time to get his piece customized, or repaired.

Well, there *is* a place where this hasn't happened, and, based on my acquaintance with and knowledge of these gentlemen—it won't! That's a broad statement, I realize, and, in fact, I'm sticking my neck out by making it, no question about it! I wouldn't do this for any other gunsmithing outfit in the world but *Sports West,* 2200 W. Alameda Avenue, Denver, Colorado.

Sports West specializes in custom combat and target jobs on .45 pistols, and, in my opinion, *deserves* its niche in the top five shops in the United States.

Above: Reliability is also superb with the Sports West custom .45. Here is what author's .45 Mark IV looked like after completion of a tunnel-clearing exercise at American Pistol Institute. Gun was buried in 8 inches of loose, dry dirt, but continued to function!

Owned and operated by Ikey Starks, 1966 National Big-Bore Rifle Champion, and George Orndorf, master-class gunsmith, Sports West produces the best, most reliable, accurate .45s I have had the pleasure to use.

So, down to business. Ikey and George build guns, and, in particular, .45s. They do it painstakingly, by hand, taking as long as necessary to do the job right. If something is satisfactory to them, and, believe me, they're much more critical than you or I are qualified to be, it's *right!* Yet, their prices aren't even near what most custom outfits charge.

Why? Ikey states:

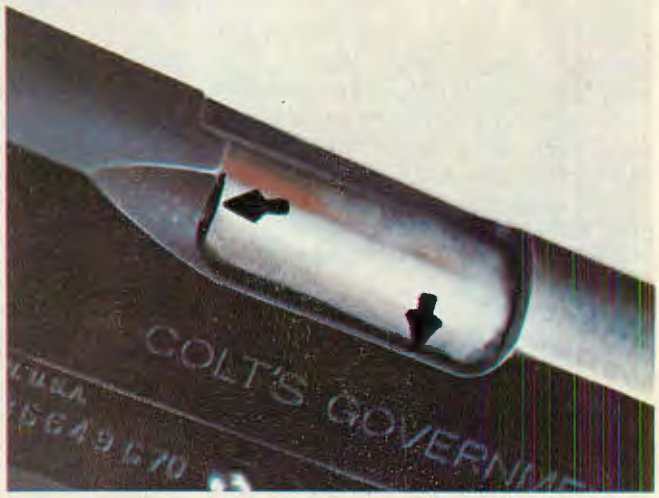
> We want to give the customer his money's worth and a little bit more. That way, he'll be satisfied, and, in the future when he needs work done, he'll come to us. Many of the present-day outfits charge excessively for work, which, sooner or later, the customer realizes. If the customer feels he's been shafted, he'll never come back to you again.

Sounds like something from the Bronze Age of business, doesn't it? Actually, I found it quite refreshing in this hype-age of *buyer beware.* More importantly, *he means it, and lives it.*

Let's take a look at the Sports West operation and show you what they do.

Being a combat shooter, and having absolutely no interest in target shooting, I

Above: Custom options, such as this long trigger, are available from Sports West to insure that customer's gun fullfills his specs.



Above: Relieving of ejection port facilitates more efficient ejection of spent cartridge case; is one of the many practical options offered by Sports West in Custom Combat jobs.

Left: Standard Colt's barrel, showing lugs on underside that push locking cams into recesses inside slide.

Right: Redesigned, reshaped lugs on same barrel to provide maximum upward pressure on barrel when gun is in battery. This is part of "combat Accuracy job." As gun wears, fit actually stays tight due to this concept.

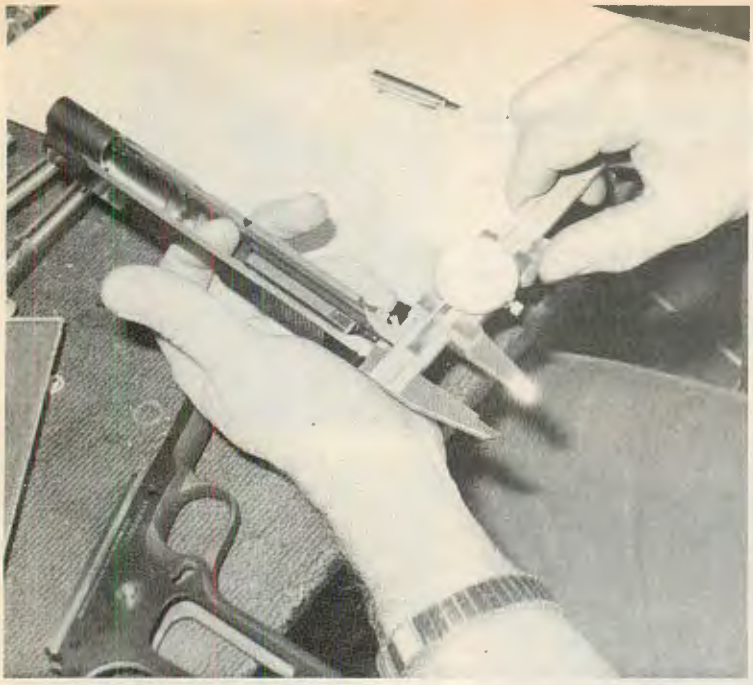
Above: Magazine well was bevelled to author's specs for faster speed-loading of magazines under stress.

Above: Special bushing is fitted to all guns and handfitted to barrel for maximum rigidity when gun is in battery. This allows each shot to go into same place due to identical barrel, slide, frame relationship.

Right: Adjustable Micro rear sight, with white outlined notch, was requested by author for both Mark IV and Combat Commander. Sight is handfitted and dehorned.

Below: Critically necessary part of Combat conversion of .45 auto is "throating" of weapon to insure maximum feeding reliability with all types of ammunition and bullet shapes. Most standard autos will feed reliably only with ball or round-nose lead ammunition.

Below: Baughman type "quick-draw" front sight with Red insert was opted for by author Taylor. Sight is silver soldered, rather than pinned, for optimum reliability.



Above: "Combat Accuracy Job" entailed precision making of frame, slide, and barrel. Here, Starks mikes inside dimensions of grooves in .45 Combat Commander slide.

Above: Rails on frame are then reshaped, and redesigned to fit within .002 the grooves in slide. Here Starks checks rail measurements during handfitting process.

asked Ikey and George to build me a couple of custom .45s a la combat, and handed them a new Colt's Combat Commander and a Mark IV. They interviewed me at length, discussing my shooting style, expertise, preferences, etc., and, based on this interview, proceeded to build me the finest combat guns I have ever had.

This stage of developing a relationship with the customer and finding out what he wants is important, and, in my opinion, grossly overlooked by most custom shops. This is so because, really, how can you build a custom gun for someone unless you get to know his preferences? Yet, most shops merely offer a list of what they will do and leave the entire matter up to the customer. Often, as a result, the gun the customer ends up with isn't what he really wanted, a situation which could have been prevented if the 'smith had bothered to spend a few minutes talking to his potential customer, explaining various concepts to him and illustrating to him what he needs to fulfill his wants and needs.

I, not being of the "candy-man" ilk, advised Ikey and George that I wasn't interested in cosmetic-customized guns, such as nickle-plated jobs, squared trigger guards, etc., and only wanted what I needed to better accomplish the mission of improved combat shooting. If a customer wants electroless nickle-plating, or squared trigger guards or anything else for that matter, they can fix him up with no problem. I, however, abstained and specified a blued finish.

The combination we decided on for my specific requirements is as follows:

1. Baughman type quick draw ramp front sight, with red insert.
2. Adjustable, dehorned, Micro rear sight, with white outline.
3. Flat mainspring housing.
4. Long trigger.
5. King Speed Safety.
6. Bevelled magazine well for quicker speed loading.
7. Trigger job: 3.5 lbs. pull.
8. Full combat accuracy job.
9. Relieved ejection port for better ejection of spent brass.

I spent an entire week in the Sports West shop observing their techniques and watching their operation in general, as they worked on my two pistols.

First, the factory sights are removed, and the Baughman front sight *silver-soldered,* not merely pinned, to the slide. The entire assembly is then cleaned up and polished, and if an insert is required, mounted in the sight blade. Then the slide is locked into the milling machine and the dovetail for the Micro rear sight is cut, and the sight unit itself handfitted and installed. The slide is then sandblasted along its top surfaces, with the sides polished and readied for rebluing, and the ejection port relieved.

Meanwhile, the magazine well is bevelled by hand and the speed safety hand-fitted, for maximum ease of operation and reliability.

The flat mainspring housing is also handfitted, with the entire inside surface that bears against the sear spring brightly polished to minimize friction and wear.

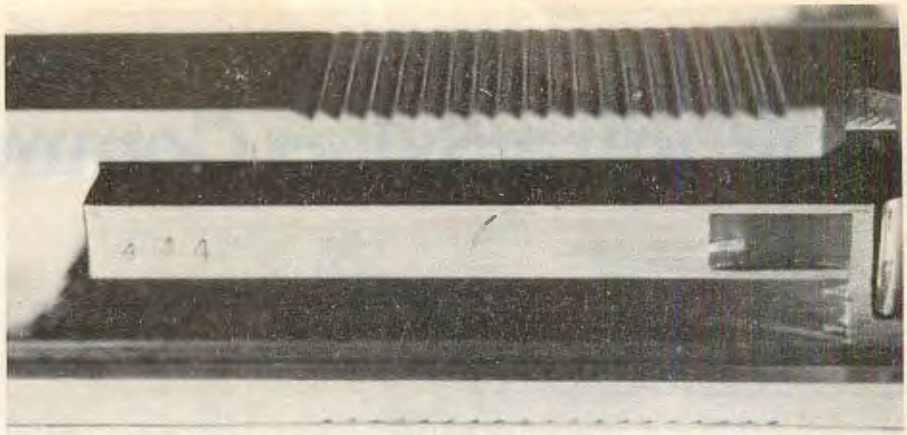
Then comes the painstaking trigger-job, with Ikey spending several hours on one gun alone, until he is satisfied with the way it "feels." On my Combat Commander, it took what seemed to be an eternity, while my Mark IV seemed to fly along. Just an example of taking however long one must to get the job done right. Although each gun of a certain type is technically "identical," each one is, in reality, totally different and requires completely individual handling from piece to piece.

Once the long trigger was fitted, and the trigger job completed, came the "combat accuracy job." This consists of Ikey completely refitting the barrel, slide, and frame to virtually eliminate all "play" between the three pieces when the gun is locked into battery and ready to fire. This means that the shots will go to the same place, time after time after time. The rails of the frame are handfitted, lapped and polished to fit the grooves in the slide, and the lugs on the barrel are built up and totally reshaped to cause upward pressure, locking the barrel tightly into the notches inside the slide, when the gun is in battery.

I was apprehensive about this, particularly as I watched the process take place, but Ikey assured me that reliability would not be adversely affected. If anything, he said, it would be increased, since he had eliminated virtually all wear and tear of mating surfaces by friction. I was to find that he knew exactly what he was talking about!

Once the job on the frame, slide, and barrel lugs was complete, Ikey turned his attention to the barrel bushing and

Above: Slide and Frame are then lapped in special machine to insure fit and minimize galling and wear.



Above: Result of process is superbly fitting slide that has no "play" whatsoever when in battery.

Above: Rails show result of hand-honed, precision accuracy process.

muzzle. He polished and reshaped the barrel on both my Commander and Mark IV and handfitted special bushings to them. The theory, which I later proved time and time again under adverse field conditions, is that the gun is totally rigid while in battery, but loose when open. Thus, accumulated dirt and grit has someplace to go while the gun is functioning, and, as a result, does not cause malfunctions. The key to this is that Ikey retimes the gun to only be in battery the last eighth-inch or so that it travels. This means that it goes into and out of battery quicker, and does not give grit the opportunity to settle in critical areas of the gun's operating machinery.

Once this was accomplished, he "throated" both guns to assure optimum feeding with the widest possible array of bullet shapes. This is part of the "combat accuracy job."

I was excited and apprehensive as I watched my guns being reassembled after they returned from the bluing tanks. I just couldn't believe that anything this beautifully crafted could be accurate *and* reliable. Ikey and I then proceeded to the range and I, with my Commander, upon firing my first five-shot string, offhand at 20 meters, at the IPSC "Item" target, was totally amazed to find that the entire string went into 1¼ inches edge to edge! Sandbagged, or shot from a rest, both guns grouped consistently into one inch at 50 meters! So, as far as accuracy was concerned, I could ask for no more.

Reliability was flawless too, with both guns now having digested approximately 300 rounds each of the following:

- **a.** 185g Hensley & Gibbs wadcutter—3.5g of Bullseye.
- **b.** 185g Factory Wadcutter, Remington, Winchester, Federal.
- **c.** 200g Hensley & Gibbs Semi-wadcutter—5.6g Winchester 231.
- **d.** 225g Lyman cast lead Roundnose—6.1g Unique.
- **e.** 230g Factory "Hardball," Remington, Federal, Winchester.
- **f.** 230g military (US) "Hardball," - WCC, RA, EC43, and FC.
- **g.** 230g Belgian "Hardball."
- **h.** 200g Speer Jacketed Hollow-point.
- **i.** 190g Super-Vel Jacket Hollow Point.
- **j.** 200g Lyman Semi-wadcutter—7.3g Unique.

To date, I have experienced *no malfunctions and no failures to feed!* Even during a "tunnel clearing" exercise at Jeff Cooper's American Pistol Institute, in which portions of the tunnel fell from the roof of the shaft onto the weapon and firer, and, in my case, *completely buried my gun in eight inches of dry, loose dirt, no malfunctions were experienced!* So, I can state that one can have reliability and extreme accuracy in one package after all. I'd never have believed it had I not actually experienced it.

a. and **b.** in the above list are notorious for causing feeding problems in autos, as are **g., h.** and **j.** If a gun will feed those it will feed anything.

In summary, if you are in need of a *primo* custom job on your pet .45, don't want to spend an arm and a leg unnecessarily, and don't want the shop to keep your gun for two years, then you'd best contact Sports West. Any gun they do for you will end up being your favorite piece. Accuracy and reliability *can* be placed together in one package, along with other necessary refinements that a true combat pistol needs to better accomplish its intended mission, for a fair, reasonable price. Give Sports West a try. You'll see what I mean.

Return Of A Legend

Fairbairn-Sykes Commando Knife

by Mike Grau

I have the extreme pleasure of informing SOF's readers that it is now possible to own a genuine Fairbairn-Sykes fighting knife: a limited Fairbairn-estate-authorized edition, unlike any previous F-S you have seen to date. Please join me in a brief background sketch of William Ewart Fairbairn and a look at the effort involved in the regeneration of this legendary knife!

The new F-S knife has been made possible by the efforts of William Cassidy. I am sure that SOF readers are familiar with Cassidy's *The Complete Book of Knife Fighting, Basic Manual of Knife Fighting,* and much of his fine work in security technical publications. His *Manual* is one of the simplest, most thorough, finest basic manuals on knife fighting available. It's about all one needs — besides practice — to survive. It can be ordered from Paladin Press, P.O. Box 1307, Boulder, CO 80306.

William Cassidy was a close personal friend of Fairbairn's late son, Major John Fairbairn, and is undoubtedly the foremost authority on Fairbairn's life and the F-S knife's history and development. Cassidy, a most unusual man by today's standards, is polite, quiet, extremely courteous and unassuming, and his silent inner strength and confidence are rarely seen in today's muddled world.

Bill Cassidy has achieved a most admirable goal: giving Lt. Col. W. E. Fairbairn long deserved recognition; providing us with a true, good-quality F-S knife, and contributing to Fairbairn's estate. At $85.00 (U.S.), this is one of the most outstanding bargains in years. My order went in a few moments after handling one of the test prototypes.

Fairbairn: mention that name, and the usual response is, "Oh yes, the chap who invented the British commando knife." But during a recent interview, Bill Cassidy was able to provide us with the following glimpse of Fairbairn's other accomplishments.

Lt. Col. Fairbairn was undoubtedly one of mankind's greatest innovators and tacticians. Fairbairn joined the Shanghai Municipal Police in China in 1907; by 1935 he had attained the rank of assistant commissioner. In 28 years of service he served as superintendent, chief inspector, and drill instructor.

Fairbairn developed the use of jujitsu-based unarmed combat for police in 1918. In 1919, he became the first to introduce the 1911 .45 Colt Auto to police service in Asia. He pioneered the introduction of realistic police training, induced stress methods and combat simulation in 1921.

The S.M.P. faced daily situations at which most fiction writers would boggle. High homicide rates, contract murder, multiple killings and kidnappings by organized gangs, well armed with automatic and semi-auto weapons, were routine, almost daily occurrences. House-to-house, room-to-room combat was the norm, not the exception.

From this seething cauldron of violence, which the *noblesse oblige* of Shanghai rarely saw, emerged the most influential edged weapon of the 20th century, the Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knife.

Cassidy tells us that it was developed in 1931 at the Shanghai Municipal Police Armory by W. E. Fairbairn, E. A. Sykes, Fairbairn's son John Fairbairn, two U.S. Marine Corps officers, and a white Russian Colonel.

On hand and available in the armory were a number of Boer War bayonets, whose blades became the basis for the first F-S knives. Three were manufactured; their blades were a bit thicker than those of the present knives. The handles were constructed of horn, which was then checkered.

In 1940, Fairbairn retired from the S.M.P. At the time he was assistant commissioner in charge of training and the armed reserve. In company with Eric Sykes, he went to Britain and offered his service to the war office. It should be remembered that Fairbairn was in his late 40s at the time.

The war office informed him that he was too old. This was extremely humorous, since he had just returned from active service in Shanghai where he had personally led his units in nightly raids against armed opponents.

Fortunately, a member of the British Secret Service happened to be present on this occasion. In the quite circuitous British system of approach, Fairbairn was contacted and a proposition made. He was asked if he would care to serve as an instructor in close combat to a group which was just being developed. This group would then in turn instruct the Commando and SOE (Special Operations Executive) agents. Their first requirement of him was a suitable knife. Fairbairn immediately accepted.

Fairbairn then presented them with one of the three original F-S knives. It met with approval, and his next task was to produce the knife in quantity. He first went to the Enfield Pattern Room. Enfield suggested that he approach Wilkinson Sword, Ltd. Fairbairn knew the elder John Wilkinson, as he had dealt with the firm in the production of a bullet-proof vest in the late 1920s.

John Wilkinson examined the F-S knife and stated, "It's a nice enough knife, but it will never do!"

Cassidy tells us Fairbairn made Wilkinson this proposal: "I will personally buy 300 of the knives and guarantee their sale. If I sell the 300 knives, will you agree the knife has merit?"

In November 1940, the first 300 square-shanked F-S fighting knives by Wilkinson were produced.

Fairbairn then went to SOE equipment/procurement section and said, "Gentlemen, this is the knife. I believe it will fulfill all your requirements." SOE agreed and began ordering them immediately. The further development by Wilkinson at this period is fairly well known.

The U.S. intelligence service was modeled on the British SOE and became Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which, of course, became CIA. OSS was headed by the soon-to-be-famous "Wild Bill Donovan." At this time President Roosevelt was besieging Prime Minister Churchill with requests for SOE experts. Once again Fairbairn's reputation preceded him, for he was specifically requested by Roosevelt, and Churchill reluctantly agreed to second him to the OSS.

Fairbairn's knife did not meet great success with American troopers, who had not been educated in the F-S system of knife fighting, and who generally tried to make the F-S fighting knife perform like the venerable K-Bar, i.e., open cans, etc. To complicate matters, American OSS and Marine Corps F-S knife blades were thinner than the English F-S.

Cassidy informs us that one must always bear in mind the F-S knife was designed to fight primarily against other knives. It was designed for thrusting into the human body and to slice veins. It is a light-duty weapon. I agree with those who state that the F-S knife, wielded by a competent exponent of the F-S system of knife fighting, can and will reduce today's so-called experts to ribbons in a short time.

Remember, Fairbairn survived over 35 years of close combat of a sort which can render an above-average knife man dead in a very short time. This was real combat not hypothetical hype or barrio fighting.

The F-S knife was not made to open ration cans, cut wire, or be a substitute dart when you are bored. It is by no means an indestructible knife. The unfavorable stories of the F-S knife that you hear are due to poorly constructed OSS and Marine versions of the knife.

It is important to note that William Ewart Fairbairn never received a penny from his masterpiece or from any designs or innovations, but that William Cassidy, a close personal friend of Fairbairn's son, has now rectified this oversight. Shortly before Maj. Fairbairn's death, Cassidy was his guest in England. During this visit, it was decided to recreate the original knife. At the end of the visit, Cassidy took the railway to Sheffield.

Once the cutlery production center of world trade, Sheffield is now sadly dormant. Upon his arrival, Cassidy set out to tour the city. Walking down a picturesque alley, he came upon a small cutlery shop. Entering it, he introduced himself, whereupon to his amazement the proprietor produced a copy of *Knife Digest* and requested an autograph!

Quite straightforwardly, Cassidy said, "I want to make 1000 F-S knives with the knurled grip and with permission of the Fairbairn estate."

The cutler replied positively that it could not be done in England today. Bill stated that it could — and he has now proved that he was right.

Although Ibberson produces the most commonly found F-S variant today, widely marketed as a genuine F-S fighting knife, these knives are commonly forged from what is known as E-N-9 steel. E-N-9 is brine-quenched steel, salt-hardened, and is of very poor quality. Among cutlers in Sheffield it is known as railroad track. They are batch tempered and machine ground from blanks. A cast zinc alloy handle is thrust on the tang. The knife is parkerized and pushed out the door to the general public. Insult is further added to injury by nefarious individuals, who stamp F-S variants with a broad arrow ordnance mark and peddle them as genuine issue F-S contract knives.

The first problem in reproducing the original F-S was obtaining good steel. Cassidy was able to obtain 01 oil-steel, one of the best carbon steels available and the standard of the American knife industry. Cassidy's F-S knife is slightly thicker than the common variant and is true to the original.

The second problem Cassidy faced was to correctly reproduce the correct F-S grip. The ring grip, the common variant, was a wartime expedient, incorporated only to facilitate fast production. Originated by Rogers, it was intensely disliked by Fairbairn because it destroyed the balance of the knife. In fact, Fairbairn gave way only so that the knives might reach Allied forces more quickly.

It took Cassidy almost eight months to find someone who would knurl the grip out of bronze to meet original specifications. The gods smiled on him, however, when he located a turner, who had worked for Wilkinson in 1940 and who had hand knurled the original 300 handles on the first F-S knives. The gentleman readily agreed to do the work. However, he did not have access to a lathe.

Cassidy immediately presented him with the finest available lathe. The turner commenced work at once. Working from his original pattern, he produced the exact grip of the F-S knife. His contribution in exactness, right down to the slightly lathe-chewed knurls, makes the F-S knife "live" exactly as the 1940 model did. When held in the hand, its life force is immediately sensed.

Hold the true F-S and then one of the mass-marketed variants. The dead feel of the variants is magnified a hundredfold, while the F-S courses with life and breath!

The "S" guard is correctly rolled from nickel sheet.

The gods again ruled in Bill Cassidy's favor, when he found two men who had assembled F-S knives for Rogers during the war, and skilled grinders to support them, who paid particular attention to the centerline of the blade in the F-S knives.

Testing of the F-S knives was done by CATRA (Cutlery Allied Trades Research Association in Sheffield). The senior metallurgist ran a 100-percent proof on the blades. CATRA tested six out of every 100 blades to destruction in bending tests. The standard British military test is a 30-degree bend before fracture. The F-S knives went 50 degrees before fracture, exceeding British military requirements. All blades were tested sonicly; a few defective blades were found and destroyed.

Bill Cassidy has done all that an individual can do to produce a quality, exact specification F-S knife. He could have gone to more exotic steel, produced more knives and obtained perfect detail on the grip by investment casting.

However, you and I could probably not afford it. And most important, it would not have been faithful to the original. Bill Cassidy has given us a faithful, true F-S knife in every detail, except one: It exceeds the original test specification!

With the authorization of the Fairbairn estate, 500 of the knives are being sold in Canada and Great Britain and a second 500 in the U.S. The Fairbairn estate will receive a generous percentage of the gross sales figure of the 1000-knife edition.

The true F-S knife measures seven inches in blade length and 4-5/8 inches for the grip. Weight is eight ounces. The authorized F-S is slightly thicker in the blade than common variants.

I was fortunate enough to examine the prototype Applegate-Fairbairn, which was jointly designed by Col. Rex Applegate, who needs no introduction, and W. E. Fairbairn, with certain later refinements by Cassidy. The knife was designed in 1945 in response to the needs of American servicemen, who were packing the American-built F-S type and were not skilled in the F-S system of fighting. Castle Knife Company will be offering it in 1979.

The Applegate-Fairbairn was essentially designed for U.S. usage. It is a heavy-duty version of the Fairbairn-Sykes, a double-edged, straight-bladed, cut-and-thrust weapon possessing an oval handle. It is 11¼ inches long overall and weighs ¾s of a pound.

When held in the hand, it is incredibly impressive!

A good knife is essential for survival in a knife fight. The only one authorized by the Fairbairn estate, the F-S fighting knife, is available for $85.00 (U.S.) from Castle Knife Company, 55 Sutter Street, Suite 93, San Francisco, CA 94104. SOF endorses the offering wholeheartedly!

Tribute To A Professional Warrior

Michael Echanis

16 Nov 1950 - 8 Sept 1978

by N.E. MacDougald

Soldier of Fortune Martial Arts Editor Michael D. Echanis, modern master of martial arts, who plied his skill in combat as well as in a *dojo* (gym), met an untimely death by plane crash on 8 September 1978. Echanis, whose legendary capabilities are well known to our readers, had been chief military advisor to Nicaraguan President Major Anastasio Samoza for one year, when the Aero Commander in which he was a passenager plunged into Lake Nicaragua. Also killed were Charles Sanders, Echanis' second-in-command and a close friend, a mysterious Vietnamese merc named Nguyen van "Bobby" Nguyen, and Brigadier General Jose Ivan Alegrett Perez, operations chief of the Nicaraguan National Guard.

In his role as chief military advisor, Echanis reputedly had a $5 million intelligence budget in Nicaragua. After a reputation-building year in this Central American country, Echanis, together with Sanders and Nguyen, boarded the twin-engined plane, owned and allegedly piloted by Perez. All aboard died when it fell into the waters of Lake Nicaragua. Government sources blame bad weather for the crash, but one wire service report indicated that local sources declared the weather was clear and the plane exploded in flight, then plummeted lakeward.

Was Echanis sabotaged by a jealous indigenous rival or by Marxist Sandinistas? Did his intelligence net expose too sensitive a plot? Did his unflagging honesty step on too many toes? At present it is doubtful whether we will ever know the truth about the cause of his death. In any case, Echanis was a "professional" in the true sense of the word and we at SOF mourn his death.

Echanis' childhood was a happy one. As in later years, he had many friends of all ages and backgrounds and enjoyed various activities.

"Mike loved animals. He loved to hunt and fish. He had every kind of animal under the sun. He always had bird dogs. Once, while fishing with his great uncle, Coyote Joe, Mike caught a rattlesnake in a jar and brought it home. He didn't keep *that* long!" laughed Echanis' mother, Pat.

Echanis' roots were in the sleepy Oregon farming community of Ontario (population 6,000), across the Snake River from Idaho. He was the eldest of two brothers and a sister. His mother was a homemaker and his father, Frank, a local innkeeper.

Above: Michael Echanis, chief military advisor of anti-terrorist commandos, Nicaragua 1978.

Mrs. Echanis, who graciously granted SOF an interview after deciding that her son's death was "a closed issue," recalls, "Mike played guard in basketball and competed in track; high jump and long jump and crosscountry. He wasn't too large in high school: he probably weighed about 150 and was about five feet 10, I guess. Not really big, so he didn't go out for football .... He wasn't a fighter in high school. Mike was rarely in fist fights, but he stood up for himself .... He was an above-average student; all his teachers said he could have applied himself more and done better. But he was enjoying everything every day." Mrs. Echanis occasionally lapsed into present tense while discussing her late son. She is still adjusting.

Mike's love of sports is well remembered in his home town. Dr. Wilford Sanders, Chuck's father, recalls, "Basketball was Mike's forte; he worked hard at that in high school. I admired his drive."

One of Echanis' high school teachers wrote Mrs. Echanis, "I have thought of Mike many times since his return from Vietnam. It has been an inspiration to watch a young teenager who has more than his share of energy in the classroom mature and develop into a fine young man. He was able, in spite of physical adversities, to use his energies for the betterment of mankind. I think of Mike as one who came so far and accomplished so much and it has made our lives richer for having known him."

Lest the reader mistakenly infer that Echanis was a model student, one of his high school buddies, Mike Sullivan, fondly recalls, "We, about 10 or 12 of us, were always involved in pranks, and things often got out of hand.

"This is a small town; we'd get bored. We used to 'make the rounds' every weekend: you know, cruise around. One night we chopped all the limbs off the Christmas tree in the town square. Another night, we swiped a couple of bushels of apples and threw apples through about half the high school windows. We prided ourselves on our ability to elude the police, so half the stuff we did was just to get 'em [the police] to chase us. We knew the town like the back of our hand and we'd commando around and they'd never catch us.

"One time about six of us got to pushing a big tractor rim down an alley; it kinda got away from us and rolled into traffic and hit a car. The cops chased us into a fenced-off vacant lot and cornered us. But after they caught some of us, Mike snuck around their blind side and turned the cops' own spotlight on them and the rest of us got away. Later, the cops caught some more and took them to the police station. When the cops left some of our

buddies in the corridor, we snuck around back and let 'em out.

"One night — it was winter - we grabbed a couple of cases of empty pop bottles from somebody's garage. We went to the big hill by the high school stadium and chucked the bottles in front of a couple of cars, but the cars were full of cops on their way to police science classes at the high school. It was real cold. We always wore dark clothing, kind of a uniform, you might say. Black hooded sweat shirt, dark workout pants and black sneakers.

"In fact, when Mike talked to me about a year ago, he said that the foundations for his stalking techniques were learned as a boy. We learned it was sometimes better to hide than run. Anyway, we hid down in the field and under the bleachers. Mike and I jumped a big fence and landed near a cop car and ran in front of it. By the time they got out of the car, we ran toward a pile of weeds in a vacant lot. Mike and me were laying there so close, we could see the shine on one cop's shoes. We bit our fingers to keep from laughing and held our breath so the vapor wouldn't show. The cop walked away and we ran the other way. We *never* were caught in the act!

"Mike drove like a nut. He wrecked every car his dad ever had. One time he ran a stop sign, he was always running stop signs, and a cop chased him and Mike took off the other way. Cops never caught him. Mike did more things than most people do in 90 years.

"We got to making bombs, pipe bombs mostly, out of black powder. We tested 'em in the hills. One night around 3 a.m., we threw a bomb into a parked VW. We doubled back, 'cause it didn't go off right away, just in time to see a bright flash and then hear a loud boom. The windows blew out and the doors blew off.

"This was toward the end when the cops were cracking down on us . . . We used to bust the street lights with rocks, so the cops put in plastic lights, so we blew 'em out with shotguns.

"Anyway, then we made a bigger bomb. There was this old lady that lived near school; a real grouch, used to yell at us for cutting across her lawn. Well, we blew up her woodshed.

"Like I said, things just kind of snowballed. After the woodshed, the state insurance inspectors pressured the cops and they hauled us in one at a time and found out what we'd done. We all settled down after that."

Above: In *ki* (concentration) demonstration, Echanis reclines as colleague shatters concrete blocks with sledge hammer.

Above: Grimacing as cohort drives jeep over him, Echanis highlights SEAL TEAM-2 reunion, Little Creek, Va., July 1977.

When Echanis wasn't busy "making the rounds" with his cronies or playing basketball, he and Sanders studied judo at a *dojo* (gym) in town. This was the beginning of a long and faithful relationship with the martial arts.

Echanis finished high school in 1969, but skipped graduation ceremonies to do something he'd wanted for years: join the army. His years in service included an infantry tour in Vietnam where, in 1970, the truck in which he was riding was ambushed by NVA in An Khe Pass. Wounded almost immediately in the foot by an AK-47 round, Echanis returned fire while being hit three more times by small arms fire. He received the Bronze Star with "V" device for his heroism. He also received devastating damage to his right calf and foot.

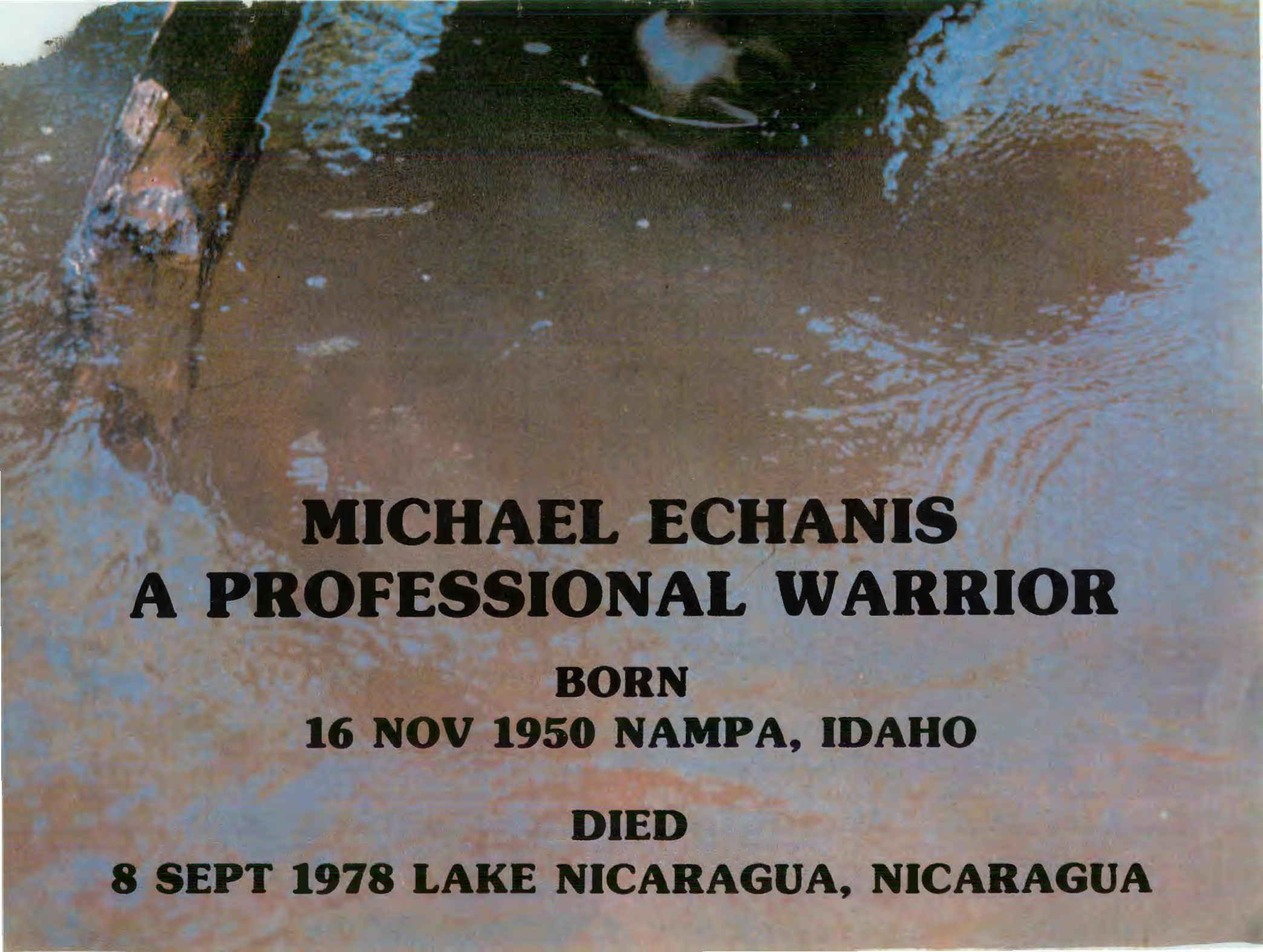
After several delicate operations and eight months in a hospital, an army doctor told Echanis that he'd probably have only limited use of his leg after several months of intense physical therapy.

Dr. Sanders, Chuck's father, recalls, "When I saw Mike, he was looking badly. I said, 'Mike, you've got to exercise and use those muscles. You've got to really get on it.' Mike did more than an average individual would do. If he hadn't he would have been a cripple."

"After the hospital in San Francisco turned him loose, Mike would come home every chance he had. He'd fly back and forth on leave on weekends. And he had a large cast on his leg, clear to his hip. He was home one weekend when his father and his cousin Johnny went hunting. I just couldn't believe it that morning; he got up and started telling me that he was going deer hunting with those guys. It was all he could do to get into the car. I wouldn't be surprised if he got out and tried to shoot a deer. He just wouldn't let anything stop him," said Mrs. Echanis.

After being medically discharged with disability pension, Echanis began the long frustrating journey toward recovery. At his release from the hospital, he weighed a scant 120 pounds. After many months, he was able to walk again. Almost immediately, he began lifting weights. When he commenced weight training, he was up to 150 pounds. Rigorous lifting plus anabolic steroids pushed his weight up to 220 pounds. He trained with high school pal Steven Fields. Only two years after being wounded, Echanis was practicing martial arts again. And practicing with a ferocity perhaps born of compensation.

In 1973, he studied at Jon's Karate, Kung Fu Studio in Boise, about 55 miles from home. But he wasn't getting enough



MICHAEL ECHANIS
A PROFESSIONAL WARRIOR

BORN
16 NOV 1950 NAMPA, IDAHO

DIED
8 SEPT 1978 LAKE NICARAGUA, NICARAGUA

sparring to suit him, so he moved to Los Angeles to study under Joo Bang Lee, Supreme Grand Master of Hwarang Do, an esoteric martial art stressing mental training as much as physical. Echanis became so proficient that he was promoted to Sul Sa, master of infiltration, thus becoming the first American so honored.

Echanis had been interested in *ki* (concentration) power from the time he began to study martial arts. Under Joo Bang Lee's expert instruction, Echanis surpassed even his instructor's goals. "Mike's miraculous recovery after being wounded and his ability to kick and run were due to his mental ability to control pain and acupuncture performed by Joo Bang Lee," stated Hon Kim, editor of *Black Belt* Magazine.

Joo Bang Lee's faithful student and manager of the international headquarters for the Hwarangdo Association, John Huppuch, declared, "Mike and Chuck both were the Grand Master's prize students. They were two of our best instructors. It was with great sadness that we learned of their accident. I believe they both epitomized good qualities: leadership, courage, a lot of patriotism, loyalty to their country and to their parents. They fought hard for what they believed in."

Echanis then went back to working for the Department of Defense, this time as a civilian. He taught elite special warfare units such as SEALs, Special Forces, and Rangers, both armed and unarmed combat techniques. While at Fort Bragg, Echanis began writing his successful how-to books.

Both of Echanis' softcover books have sold well. They are well-thought-out manuals with many photographs. The first, *Knife Self-Defense for Combat,* is just over 100 pages. Echanis' second effort, *Knife Fighting, Knife Throwing for Combat,* just shy of 200 pages, has become a primer on the subject. His third book, which will deal with stick fighting, is currently at the printer's and will be available in 1979.

M/SGT Vladimer "John" Jakovenko, Operations Sergeant for "A" team, "C" Co., 3rd Battalion, 5th SF Group, met Echanis through Sanders. "They used to be on my team in 1973 or 1974," he said. "We used to work out together and talk about the [martial arts] philosophy and all. He came over for dinner a couple of times.

"I wish I could say I'd served with the man, but I never did. He was a very charismatic person. He was a very deep person, believe it or not. A lot of people might have misunderstood the guy. He wasn't a fake. He was very realistic as far as he believed in pulling no punches. That's with life and that's also on the mat. He definitely believed in a lot of realism. I think people misunderstood. They think, well, you know, this guy is a savage or whatever. But Mike figured if he was going to learn or teach anything, it had to be realistic. That's the type of person Mike was." Perhaps an indication of the degree of realism Echanis insisted upon was the number of broken noses, arms, and legs that his trainees incurred during training.

"Mike showed up one time in Puerto Rico with us," Jakovenko continued. "He put on a real good martial arts demonstration. The company commander wanted Mike and me to put on a show for the Puerto Rican National Guard. And we put on a real good one; it got to be almost too good. He popped me a little harder than he meant to, so I popped him back, and before you know it we had a real good thing going there .... I just hope hell they let his memory rest."

Jakovenko, incidentally, is a legend in himself. He once participated in a cross-border operation into North Vietnam to rescue some American POWs, but when his outfit got there, the prisoners had vanished. (This theme was recently explored in the second-rate film *Good Guys Wear Black.*)

While at Fort Bragg teaching the world's fighting elite, Echanis and Sanders were apparently recruited by their student, Anastasio Somoza Protecarro, the Nicaraguan President's son. During the summer of 1977, the pair arranged for their departure to Nicaragua. What they did there is still somewhat unclear. That they instructed troops in martial arts and counterinsurgency has been confirmed. Echanis told SOF staffers when he visited our offices that though he was officially the senior advisor to the Nicaraguan Anti-Terrorist Commandos, he in fact led this unit in counterinsurgency operations. Echnis was also the chief instructor for President Samoza's personal bodyguards and special elite guard.

There is some suspicion that Echanis and Sanders had covert ties with U.S. agencies. This has not been confirmed and, sadly, is now academic.

It was during the summer of 1977 that I first met Echanis in SOF's old offices. He growled hello at me and shook my hand firmly. He didn't try to break my hand as so many macho types do. His quiet confidence bespoke his security.

I went to work and overheard Echanis and Publisher Brown talk of cabbages and kings. I began to realize that Echanis was not another armchair adventurer or some sad case resting on laurels earned 10 or 20 years ago. I learned more about him through SOF's articles (see September 1977, November 1977, September 1978).

Months later, I bumped into Echanis in SOF's business office. We talked for a while about Communism in general and Nicaragua in particular. During our discussion, a SOF stringer kept badgering Echanis for a karate lesson. Echanis quietly declined each request. Finally, he stood up and with a twinkle in his eye acquiesced to one lesson.

Echanis' expression caused our visitor to backpeddle and change his mind, but the martial artist playfully became as persistent as his tormenter. The lesson was the one-inch punch. Echanis centered his meaty fist near the other's chest and told him to brace himself.

Now the man wanted out of the lesson and said so in a significantly higher voice. Too late. Without taking his fist more than an inch away, Echanis pushed him backward, breaking two floor-to-ceiling closet doors in the process. The man didn't pester Echanis again, but later con-

Below: Echanis (right) as young adventurer on front steps of home with little brother Frank, 1958.

fided that what startled him was he felt the push come from within his own body.

Publisher Brown knew Echanis better than other staffers. "One of the things that impressed me about the guy was his attitude toward life. He was, I hate to use the word, vivacious. Everything was humorous. But not to the extent of being obnoxious about it. I never saw him in a bad mood.

"I last met Mike at the International hotel in Managua. On Sunday, 8 July 1978, we went out sightseeing; we drove around in one of the cars that was used by their secret police. An orange carry-all vehicle with no license plates on it.

"Mike and I both had [FN] para-FALS with automatic capability and a couple of hand grenades. We felt he was a target and of course, he had mentioned before on a visit here that he had been on a hit list. And he reaffirmed this on a number of occasions down there. I was concerned. I told him as well as some of the other Americans that were there that he was running an exceptionally high profile, but he didn't seem to be concerned.

"He thought he was invincible; there was no one that could get him. But he was easily indentifiable wearing that mustache, plus running around in an orange vehicle. Furthermore, the main opposition newspaper, *La Prensa,* had reprinted extracts from the September 1978 issue of SOF, including a picture of Echanis, charging the Nicaraguan government with employing mercenaries. I had questioned Echanis prior to publication of said issue, asking if this was wise. He insisted that it would pose no problem.

He therefore became a prime target for some young macho Sandinista. It was just not the way that I would operate and I told him this on several occasions. I think it was because he planned on using this as a step to continue building his reputation: so that he would continue to be marketable elsewhere after he left Nicaragua. And he really did believe he was invincible!

"Anyway, the way we were driving through this one particular town to the north of Managua, Grenada I think it was, operations could commence at any time. Extemporaneous ops. Mike was joking about it but nonetheless, it was not to be taken lightly as far as I was concerned. Our weapons were handy at all times and so were the grenades.

"Mike was a dedicated anti-Communist and he strongly felt that the Samoza regime was the only thing standing between Nicaragua and Communism and that's how he justified his position there. He was certainly not a mercenary. He liked money and wanted to be well paid, but he was in no way there solely for it alone."

During the seizing of the capitol by Sandinistas on 22 August 1978, Echanis led several truckfuls of his 70-plus black-bereted commandos to the scene. Echanis had drawn up plans to retake the capitol [the National Palace] for the chiefs of staff.

The enemy shot up the lead truck and killed one of Echanis' captains. Although Echanis wanted to attack at once, the radio ordered him to hold off.

"My unit could have taken the building in less than 20 minutes. I estimated up to 200 to 300 of the hostages would be killed. The plan was to attack the building with tanks and blow the doors with recoilless rifles," Echanis said.

Echanis wanted to helicopter onto the roof with his commandos and enter the palace through skylights. President Samoza vetoed his plan because the Sandinistas held the president's brother's son prisoner.

According to an AP wire report, Echanis knew full well of a plot to murder Alegrett and himself. He didn't name names but stated that their proposed murder would be the beginning of a campaign to sabotage the National Guard's intelligence effort and pave the way for an officers' coup.

"My commandos are the only thing that stands in the way of a coup," Echanis said.

He continued, "I directed the Guard's training in unconventional warfare. I am in charge of the intelligence work under Alegrett's orders. I direct all the operations and the work in intelligence and the operations against the Sandinistas.

"I work with a budget of five million dollars. I have just gotten another million

Below: Echanis suspends 30 pound bucket of water from steel spoke pushed through flesh of neck.

Below: Wearing black night-fighting uniform, Echanis prepares to hurl razor-edged *shuriken* (throwing stars).

and the assignment of six colonels to organize special division of anti-terrorist intelligence. Many people on both sides are disgusted with this, and according to what we understand one of the reasons for killing Alegrett and me is to put an end to this program.

"Secretary of State Cyrus Vance sent me a letter telling me that it was a misfortune for the United States. He asked me not to violate human rights and told me that I should not kill non-combatants. I interpreted this to mean that it was all right to kill combatants," Echanis said.

He also declared that he was in Nicaragua to fight, since in the U.S. "you train for years and probably never get into combat. Here I fight all the time. I led the attack against Granada when the Sandinistas occupied the place in October. I was at Rivas and San Carlos. I have fought all over the country."

He added, "I hate the communists for what they did to my people in Vietnam. I have six AK-47 wounds in my body."

Mrs. Echanis recalled, "Mike called us on Tuesday night, that was the fifth [September]. He talked with us about 30 minutes. His father and I were both on the phone and he just called to say he was sorry he didn't send us an anniversary present and that he would be home as soon as he could. It was a very good family conversation. He said, 'Don't worry about anything, Mom, everything is fine. I had a big long talk with the man upstairs, and he said not to worry, everything is okay. You know, I talk with him a lot.'

Above: Echanis with unconventional tools of his trade. He taught flexibility in weapons choice and stressed using what was at hand.

"There is a memorial fund that we are setting up at Ontario High in memory of Mike, which people have donated to, because we felt that would have meaning for Mike because he was very involved with anything with the young people. He'd given [martial arts] demonstrations at the high school." *(Editor's Note: Those wishing to contribute to this memorial fund may do so by writing to the Michael Echanis Memorial Fund, Ontario High School, Ontario, Oregon.)*

"Mike had a generous side to him. He did many things for many people that no one ever knew about. Like when he was in Nicaragua, we got a letter from a friend of his down there. He told us in the letter that Mike had paid for all the education for six children down there. A lot of people don't know those kind of things," stated Mrs. Echanis.

In customary SOF fashion, Echanis' mysterious ladyfriend, Lisa, for whom we'd been scouring the countryside, appeared at the eleventh hour. Although she hadn't heard about his death, she had felt something was amiss and called Publisher Brown.

Lisa agreed to meet for breakfast. A slim, attractive brunette in her mid-20s entered and removed her sunglasses. Composed, confident, and eager to talk about her late friend, she lighted the first of a half-dozen long, thin, filter cigarettes. Her midwestern accent lilted softly yet precisely.

Pencil-thin tweezed eyebrows arched over intense dark eyes as she scanned the menu. She ate like a lady, but talked like a woman. Her straight hair, lightened near the front, framed regular features. Twice a sob broke her composure, telling more about her relationship with Echanis than she would have liked to reveal.

"I first met Mike during the latter part of the summer of '76. Mike was a friend of my former employer on the East coast. My boss knew me pretty well and he knew Mike very well and he thought Mike and I would get along. Mike didn't like most women, you know: they were too namby pamby.

"Mike was a Scorpio and I'm a Scorpio. Mike started showing me his photographs for the forthcoming book and we talked for awhile. Then Mike left town for a few days. He'd come into town often and we'd talk for hours, we'd go dancing, have a drink. I'd watch him work out and then he began teaching me because he knew I was really interested in the martial arts.

"In February or March of '76, we drove to Fort Bragg and spent a few days there. We picked up Chuck [Sanders] and another friend and drove non-stop to

Below: Echanis (foreground) demonstrates *ki* (concentration) by winning a tug-of-war with over 20 troopers.

southern California. We spent a couple of weeks there. I worked out in the *dojang* (gym) every day and met the Master [Joo Bang Lee]. Mike worked with Hon [Kim] on the forthcoming book. The whole trip was an experience because Mike would laugh and laugh if I hit him. He'd say, 'you can hit harder than that.' They were always teasing me. I guess it was because of their line of work; they wanted to see how I'd function under pressure.

"Mike was very harsh when he had to be. I screwed up once and he came down on me. Hard. Later he explained why he was so demanding: I had to learn to trust him and do what I was told without questioning him.

"Then we drove non-stop to Boulder. Just being cooped up in a truck with those guys for hours was amazing. I learned a lot.

"Mike and I were very sensitive to each other. I always knew when Mike was in town. Once, I had a sense that he'd come to town. Next morning he called and before he could say anything, I asked him why he didn't call the night before when he first got in. He said, 'Don't do that stuff, you *scare* me.'

"During the summer of '77, I decided to move to Colorado. I told Mike, and he liked the idea because he thought he might open a martial arts school in Colorado in the future. I moved and didn't see him again for several months. About that time, he went to Nicaragua. He asked me if I wanted to go to Nicaragua, but I never could tell if he was serious.

"The last time I saw Mike, he and Chuck came back to Colorado on Easter Sunday, '78. We shot pistols and submachine guns with your people [SOF staffers] and did another photo session. Mike and Chuck went back to Nicaragua after that.

"I wrote Mike in Nicaragua in late July, but he didn't answer my letter. I kept on top of the news and figured he was kept pretty busy with the insurgency.

"When I didn't hear from him, I got worried. Something just wasn't right. For the last four weeks I've been a raving bitch. I've been wanting to call SOF to ask Colonel Brown where Mike was. When I finally called, he broke the news to me. I asked if the bodies were positively identified and he said, 'yes.'" Lisa's eyes filled with tears, but she didn't let them fall.

"I hung up, then I called Mike's Mom. Then I called Mike's former boss, because I knew the government sometimes has people reported dead to get them out of certain situations. But he said no, this wasn't one of those times." Again tears welled up and again she stifled them.

"Mike said if he ever had a son, he'd take him to the mountains and teach him the [martial] arts, teach him to be strong, to be a warrior. He told me I would be the kind of mother he'd want for his son . . ."

Echanis' friend and business associate, Hon Kim, Editor of *Black Belt* Magazine, is also writing a memorial piece on Echanis for his January 1979 issue.

Kim recalls, "I talked to him about two days before it happened, on the phone. We were preparing to meet and talk about his third book. He sent us the manuscript. The book is in production right now. It's about stick fighting, both long and short.

Above: Chief military advisor Echanis (pointing) supervising Nicaraguan anti-terrorist commando training.

Below: Leaping, Echanis descends on student trooper. Note edged weapon.

Above: Automatic Weapons Editor, Taylor, submits to knife attack lesson by fellow editor, Echanis.

"While Mike was alive, he was enjoying every moment. If you asked him to go out to dinner and it happened to be just a bowl of fried rice and I asked him how it was, he would say, 'Just great!' I never saw him unhappy in any situation.

"He left a good impression with everybody here, although sometimes he was a pain in the ass just like anybody else — for instance, he would go downstairs to our photo department for hours and hours — but everybody there really enjoyed his company.

"I attended the memorial service held for Mike and Chuck, you know. They were Joo Bang Lee's students, so he held a Buddhist ceremony for them in Downey [California]. It was on a Saturday, September 23rd. Their parents were there too."

Both of Echanis' books begin with a quotation from John Fitzgerald Kennedy:

> The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood ... who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotions; who spends himself at a worthy cause; who at best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and ... if he fails, at least fails daring greatly so that his place shall never be with those cold, timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

As to the murky circumstances surrounding Echanis' and Sanders' death, it is doubtful that the truth will ever surface. Whether it was an onboard bomb, a missile, a legitimate accident, or something so unmysterious as the pilot's failing heart, is still unknown. And it doesn't matter. Echanis and Sanders were professional warriors. They lived and thought like warriors. Their integrity, humor, compassion, and commitment to what they believed will live on in the hearts and minds of those that knew and loved them. And that, after all, *is* what matters.

$15,000 For 480 Goats & Lots Of Terrs...

Rhodesian Goatman

by Terence Peter Cope

A year working in the Golden City of Johannesburg was enough to convince me that it might be time to move on, back to the world so to speak. But before going, I decided to have one last look at Rhodesia. To me Rhodesia is a constant high, a country that one always wants to return to, and when one is there never wants to leave. It had been my reason for going to Africa after spending eight years in the Far East, including three years in Vietnam. Yet, when I had arrived there and seen all that it had to offer, I had foolishly accepted a white collar job in South Africa. Now I was returning.

There are three acceptable means of travel to Rhodesia for the stranger arriving in South Africa. Air is the obvious choice, with Air Rhodesia alternating between 15-year-old 707s and even older Viscounts from Johannesburg into Bulawayo and Salisbury, and South African Airways ferrying you a little less comfortably but slightly faster in 727s. Air Rhodesia offers charm and peace of mind as well as impeccable service that often escapes the ever bustling and frequently not so efficient South Africans.

Road used to be the tourist's favorite second choice even after the introduction of armed convoys in April 1976 from the border north to Salisbury and Bulawayo. One can hire a car in Johannesburg, drive to the border at Beit Bridge and, depending on his arrival, catch the 7 a.m. or mid-day convoy to points north and west. With speed and petrol restrictions heavily enforced in South Africa, it is not possible to drive from Johannesburg to Bulawayo or Salisbury without staying overnight either at Messina or at Beit Bridge.

I personally recommend staying on the Rhodesian side, where in the bar of the Beit Bridge Hotel one can meet the troopies (Rhodesian GIs) as they come back from patrol, or those tossing back a quick beer before setting out on a night ambush. Beit Bridge used to be the focal point for tourist traffic from South Africa. Since the war intensified early in 1976, the tourist atmosphere of civil servants and souvenir shops selling "Rhodesia is Super" shirts has been replaced by that of an armed camp, as indeed it is. The camping ground is base for the Police Support Unit, while the army is camped only a kilometer from town.

Civilians such as myself, who normally stayed overnight in the bush, now reside in one of the town's two hotels. Tourists are few and far between, although the danger is seen more in sensationalized newspaper cuttings than any action on the ground. Rhodesia is safer to move around in than California.

The third choice of entering Rhodesia, which undoubtedly offers the most fun, is the train that runs twice weekly from Johannesburg through Botswana to Bulawayo. Train has long been my favorite method of travel, especially in Africa where the coaches tend to be comfortable in the old colonial style and the atmosphere very friendly. Rhodesian trains are no exception. Often I've seen very sober-faced gentlemen board in Johannesburg only to roll off in a sea of alcohol in Bulawayo some two days later.

To those interested in the background to the Rhodesian conflict, the train ride provides a rolling picture, literally as well as figuratively, of the complexities of the war. The train travels nearly a thousand kilometers through Botswana, a country that is technically at war with Rhodesia. But since the latter owns the railway line and all the rolling stock thereon, the railway itself is of vital importance to Botswana's economy. Since it is the only reliable north-south link, the train is allowed to steam peacefully on with Rhodesia Railways proudly emblazoned on all its coaches and locomotives.

Only at Francistown, close to the border with Rhodesia, where the train stops for 20 minutes, is there cause for concern. Frequently Botswana police, together with terrorists from nearby training camps, will board the train and demand to see passports. If one is polite and restrained no violence will ensue.

One of the oddities of Botswana is that while it is vehemently antiwhite and violently anti-Rhodesian, Francistown, the hotbed of all the racial troubles, has a large number of white faces. You will meet some of them on the train. They are our fellow countrymen, those do gooders from the Peace Corps. Or Andrew

Left: Business as usual in rural Rhodesia.

Below: At the buying table. Note cash box, calculator, and FN.

Young's youngsters, since they are the most naive group of people I've yet to meet. They are more antiwhite than the blacks and go out of their way to tell you. More than once I've seen a Peace Corps guy thrown off the train. A Rhodesian is extremely tolerant until he gets advice from a 20-year-old expert from the Eastern seaboard.

I took the train to Rhodesia this time. A slow train through Rhodesia's war. The war that Rhodesia has been fighting on behalf of an ungrateful West for 12 long and bloody years. I was going to have one last look at the Rhodesia that I'd come to know and love before heading back to the world.

The train ride as far as Francistown was uneventful. It was difficult to be otherwise when seen through an alcoholic haze from a rocking bar stool in a 40-year-old dining coach. There is little point in looking at the scenery. Africa's countryside seldom changes, whether it be Ethiopia or Swaziland. Old Africa settlers didn't call it the MMBA without good reason. To the uninitiated, that means "miles and miles of bloody Africa."

Francistown saw us stop for 20 minutes. It gave an opportunity for the FN-carrying members of Botswana's PMU together with jeans-clad black "civilians" with AK 47s (terrs from the nearby "refugee" camps, financed largely by the World Council of Churches and the United Nations) to check out the train, its cargo, and passengers. This time they were unusually polite and we were soon on our way north as scheduled. Even so, it was with considerable relief that we pulled in to Plumtree, the first town on the Rhodesian side, and the start of civilization as you and I know it. If one is white in Botswana he is fair game for any black with a gun. Despite criticism of the way Rhodesia handles its war, at least all races are guaranteed their judicial rights in a court of law. In Black Africa, it is the machine gun that metes out justice.

Above: Goats arriving at sale point.

Within five minutes of arriving in Plumtree, I knew that my trip was no longer a farewell visit. More like a "hello, here I am again" feeling. The atmosphere in Rhodesia is infectious. Those who have been there will immediately understand my sentiments. One can easily identify with this country, can feel proud of its achievements in 12 long years of unrecognized independence. I have yet to cross into Rhodesia, and I've done it many times, without regretting the year spent in Johannesburg holding down a desk job, or even the four years spent in the Far East after leaving Vietnam in 1971. Rhodesia is a country that one can easily assimilate into. It needed people then, and it needs them even more now.

I had good reason to feel that Rhodesia would be more than just a fast visit. In Plumtree I bought the *Herald* and there at the bottom of the front page was the news that a white stock buyer had been killed by terrs. I mentally noted the name of his employer and two hours later I was talking to the personnel manager, expressing my sorrow at the tragic loss of one of his employees and gently inquiring if there would now be a vacancy. There was! That is how I got into the goat business. Being the right guy, at the right time, in the right place. In a sentence, that is my personal formula for success in the adventure business. Reading about a war is no substitute for being there.

My new employer seemed very concerned for my personal safety. (As he should have been.) Where I was going, so was $15,000. If the terrs got me, they would get the cash as well. Instead of an old Peugot car which the previous buyer had used, I was given the choice of either a Leopard bulletproof personnel carrier or a mine-protected Landrover, the four-wheel-drive English version of the jeep. The Leopard had the advantage of being completely resistant to bullet penetration. Once inside and strapped in, one was 99 percent protected against injury from a mine blast. The big disadvantage was that it was slow (top speed 60 kph on tarseal) and difficult to maneuver along the dirt bush tracks that I would mainly be using. My choice was the Landrover, the standard jeep for most of the Commonwealth armed forces, as well as Rhodesia and South Africa. It wouldn't stop a bullet, but it had a good turn of speed, and while a mine blast

Below: Black Guard Force members attached to the goat buying operation as security. Mine protected Landover in background.

Continued on page 88

French Foreign Legion

Jump Into Shaba!

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Above: French Legionnaire takes aim with F-1 sniper rifle topped off with a 3.8 power telescopic sight. Has a 10 round detachable box magazine.

Shaba, June 1, 1978

All those who, from a distance, have followed the airborne operation in Kolwezi, carried out by the 2nd REP, will be better able to reconstruct events through a chronological summary of the operation, compiled by the editors of *Kepi Blanc,* and reprinted with their permission.

An Operational Combat Jump

•**May 17, 8 p.m.** The Regiment is ready to move and peace returns to camp Raffali, while the men begin one of those usual waits preceding the frequent alerts.

•**May 17, 10 a.m.** The camp siren sounds, and motorized, T.A.P. (Air Transport), those with or without L.R.A.C. (Lance rocket launcher) of the 81 and all units of the Regiment spring to their feet. The apprentices of Castelnaudary and Corte are ready for their rapid call-up and work begins for forwarding of munitions, as well as the series of calculations of weight and relative volume of different versions and types of apparatus.

•**May 18, 2:20 a.m.** The execution order reaches the Regiment and at 4:30 a.m., the first company moves towards Solenzara where they are welcomed by the Major of the base and his assistant.

•**May 18, 11:30 a.m.** General Lacaze, the last unit of the Regiment, and the first DC-8s arrive almost simultaneously: breakup and new calculations, distributions of cargo, and the aircraft takes off towards — Zaire (due to the General's confident words delivered to the Regiment, everyone knows where they will be committed).

By the distribution of the attack elements, the five detachments, each consisting of four reaction force groups, arrive at the terrain of Kinshasa dispersed and in tiers continuously from 1 p.m. to 11 a.m. the following day, (the 19th); only three unsupported combat companies (the 1st, 2nd and 3rd), a sanitary team, and reduced C.P. (Command Post) are ready to be equipped for a deployment, scheduled for 10 a.m. after having been planned for 8 a.m. The arrival of the DC-8s on the night

of the 18th-19th makes possible this projected airborne operation on an unknown, poorly marked and defined drop zone. It is difficult to comprehend events in Kolwezi, since the situation seems, from Corsica, quite hazy.

The sight of equipment with T-10 American parachutes, on whose harness the *degrafeurs* (hooks which release the Griswald bag, in which fragile objects or articles such as radios etc. are wrapped) of the French Army cannot be fastened, is amazing and the legionnaires stagger under the weight of their cases, the suffocating heat and their lack of sleep. Loading is a challenge since four Zairian C-130s and one Transall C-160 are available, whereas five C-130s and two Transalls were anticipated.

At 10:30 a.m., local time, the first C-130 takes off, followed by three others as overloaded as the first, since more than 80 equipped legionnaires are crowded aboard up to the top of the ramp, and they are followed by the C-160, delayed by a flat tire, now inflated to permit takeoff if nothing else.

The four-hour flight towards Kolwezi allows all to sleep. The doors are opened at 3:15 p.m. Inside the planes, the legionnaires are in good shape, hardly moved by the thought that the 2nd REP awaits its first combat jump since Dien Bien Phu.

After a recon over the town, in search of the drop zone, the beginning of the zone, marked by the "Hippique Club," appears under the first plane.

The jump master gives the signal: it is like an avalanche — in spite of the piling up in the aircraft — of 20 legionnaires coming out the door, descending slowly under 90 square meters of canopy to land on the drop zone's 800 meters. A few bursts of gunfire resound at the moment of exit from the plane, but the main surprise is due to the vegetation covering the zone: giant herbs 2.5 meters tall, marked throughout by termite hills four meters high!

The Europeans are liberated

From that instant on the major problem becomes regrouping, because the objectives assigned to the units must be seized rapidly. For a few hours, about 10 legionnaires err in locating the surroundings of the drop zone, while their units, as soon as the second group is airborne, charge to seize the nervecenters of the city and release the Europeans.

- The 1st Company is to recon the Jean XIII High School in the south of the old town.
- The 2nd Company is to take the west of town to liberate the Europeans, who can be held in the hospital, and control the Gecamines factory where there is a large enough motor pool to start motorizing the Regiment.
- The 3rd Company is to occupy the Impala Hotel, the post office, and a bridge providing access to the new town.

The units meet intense street combat, when they penetrate the avenues bordered by villas; everywhere harassment is heavy and corpses are scattered about. Radio reports allow them to take a head-count of the liberated Europeans who are found dazed in the streets, who come out towards them despite rebel gunfire, or are discovered in remote areas of their houses.

Extraordinary ardor pushes the legionnaires toward their objectives; hearing these Europeans tell them that there are several thousand rebels still in the city, the legionnaires know that the safety of the survivors depends on their speed.

The objectives are achieved before night falls at 6 p.m.: a large number of rebels defeated and their arms recovered. Several hundred Europeans are set free (some just at the moment they were going to be massacred). Around 5:55 p.m. the second wave of airplanes arrives to let the 4th Company, the Reconnaissance groups, the 81mm mortars and the remainder of the C.P. jump. Remembering the difficulties of regrouping during daytime with the drop zone covered by high grass and the fact that the situation does not call for immediate reinforcement makes the corps commander decide not to take the chance of losing a great number of legionnaries during a night jump. Instead, he sends the second wave back to Lumbumbashi, 300 km southeast, with orders to present themselves by daylight.

The third night passes without sleep for the units fighting in Kolwezi, while ambushes in the vicinity of the European city push back rebel penetrations that tend to form or roam in the city, after having come from the hide-outs that the legionnaries' arrival forced them to seek.

During the night, bursts of gunfire and explosions mark the death of rebels and the recovery of more weapons. The C.P. that seized the Jean XXIII High School begins to regroup the Europeans that pre-

Below: Legionnaires of the 2nd REP question suspect in village of Metaba, 10 kilometers from Kolwezi.

sent themselves in spite of orders to remain at home.

By sunrise, the S.E.R. *(Section d'Eclairage et Reconnaissance:* scouting and reconnaissance section), the 81mm mortar Section, and the remainder of the C.P. drop on the zone in the town (Z.S. Alpha), while the 4th Company is airborne over a new zone (Z.S. Bravo) to encircle the east extremity of the new town.

- The 1st Company continues its progress towards the south of the old town and proceeds under cover, to dislodge the last of the rebels in that sector.
- The 2nd Company accomplishes the same clean-up job to the west of the old town.
- The S.E.R. outflanks the east by way of the north and penetrates the old police camp and Camp Forrest.
- The 3rd Company moves toward the new town of Manika, where rebels, who have been able to regroup, hold out.
- The C.P. now complete, reorganizes the Europeans and turns them over to the Belgian Armed Forces that arrived earlier by air with a mission of evacuating the people under the jurisdiction of western countries.

•May 20th: Sporadic firefights will unfold in the conquered town, hundreds of arms and dozens of mines found near defeated rebels or in hideouts will be recovered. Heavy weapons, machine guns, AK-47s and other individual weapons of all types pile up by the command post installed in the devastated Impala Hotel.

The 2nd REP grieves over the loss of a KIA legionnaire found by the city border of Manika. Overall, however, casualties are low: a few injured jumpers and minor bullet wounds. All lost jumpers have by now rejoined units of their Regiment.

Mission Accomplished

Towards 3 p.m., the companies begin to maneuver toward the low-cost housing development. On foot, the 4th Company approaches a village located 5 km northeast of Kolwezi and is hit hard after the mined zone of Metal Shaba. Sergeant Commander Daniel is killed, and one legionnaire is seriously wounded. The 2nd Company and the S.E.R. have been driven promptly to the site as reinforcements for the 4th aboard recovered vehicles. They participate in the capture of the rebel rearguard and the chase of the tougher escapees. They are supported by sharpshooters from the 81mm Section and by a Zairian Mirage V fighter guided by an Alouette III reattached to the Regiment. The runaways, routed during the assault of the 2nd and grounded by the firing of the S.E.R., lose about 80 men during that incident. A tentative return of a few rebel vehicles to the Metal Shaba industrial zone is stopped by the cover fire of the S.E.R. and by a wave of shrapnel from the 81s.

By nightfall, ambush positions are placed all around the town. At first the night is calm and there are only a few sporadic contacts and harassments.

•May 21: The first vehicles, loaded by the commander of Technical Services at Solenzara and landed by U.S. planes in Lumbumbashi, reach Kolwezi. The 2nd REP reorganizes and searches the town, discovering more fugitives.

•May 22: A second section of vehicles reaches Kolwezi by G.M.C. (General Motors Corp.) and civilian trucks, and an operation of three companies supported by mortars is organized on Kapata city, located a few km southwest of town. A few armed rebels are defeated and a large number of weapons recovered.

•May 23: An operation is launched in the afternoon on Luilu, a mining town northwest past Metal Shaba. No Europeans are found but morale is bolstered by the recovery of about 20 legionnaires found tired out along a runway.

Toward 4:30 p.m., after all seems over, the 1st Company makes contact to the west: one legionnaire falls, mortally wounded. He is immediately revenged, and the pursuers engage to destroy the rebels. A few minutes before nightfall, they are traced down by a section of the 1st Company, blocked by the 3rd from their escape route of a 50-meter strip between the runway and the railroad tracks. Five rebels are captured by the 1st Company, but Corporal Harte is seriously injured.

Spreading toward the east, the S.E.R. moves in the direction of Lisaki in the afternoon, to reassure the Europeans there and to continue toward Lumbumbashi.

•May 24: After a night pierced by bursts of gunfire, a day of rest begins as well as preparation for a new operation on Kapata, where two Europeans are still held, in spite of legionnaire searches.

•May 25: Before sunrise, Regimental equipment is emplaced. A few rebels are defeated west of the old city limits and an M-16 is recovered; the other arms have been hidden by the rebels. At nightfall ambushes are discretely installed around Luila, where still more Europeans have been seen.

•May 26: Two Belgians having found traces of the Regiment, rejoin the C.P., while the 2nd REP returns to Luila to rest.

•May 27: The 1st Company leaves in the direction of Lumbumbashi, while a raid on the center of the fugitive rebels is mounted with two Companies and mortars, in an attempt to recover Europeans who could have been hiding due to the fleeing rebels.

During the night of the 27th-28th, most of the Regiment moves to Lumbumbashi, leaving the 3rd Company and the 81s at Kolwezi.

Although spread out over more than 300 km by the evening of the 28th, the 2nd REP has accomplished its mission: Liberate the Europeans of Kolwezi and assure Shaba by its presence and the determination of France to protect the Europeans.

The results speak for themselves: more than 2000 Europeans saved from almost certain death; 250 rebels killed, 2 A.M.L. *(Auto mitrailleuse legere:* light automatic machine guns) destroyed, weapons recovered, of which four are S.R. (recoilless) cannons, 15 mortars, 21 L.R.A.C. (rocket launchers), 10 machine guns, and 38 SMGs.

Five legionnaires fell during combat, and a number of men have been injured, but the 2nd REP has successfully executed a highly risky operation!

Below: Battle hardened Legion troopers await to move out in Shaba Province armed with MAG LMG, MAT 49 SMG and F-1 sniper rifles.

French Foreign Legion Update

by Major John S. Arvidson

Major John S. Arvidson, USAR-Ret., has been directly involved in intelligence work since the mid-40s when, as an Army NCO, he first penetrated the Communist underground in the United States. In 1950, as a result of his intelligence work, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army. During the Korean War he served as commanding officer of the 27th Raiders, U.S. Army, and in the late '50s worked as regimental intelligence officer of the 442nd ("Go For Broke") Infantry Regiment. He has also been a special agent for the California Senate Subcommittee on Un-American Activities and is currently a special correspondent for Intelligence Digest.

The world caught up with SOF readers in May 1978, when members of the French Foreign Legion 2nd R.E.P. parachuted into Kolwezi, Zaire, and the media reported their victory against 10-to-one odds over Cuban-trained Shaba rebels who had invaded from Angola. The Legion is not only active in Africa, however; its 8,000 members are stationed in South America and the South Pacific as well, performing a vital role as part of the French national defense scheme.

LEGIO PATRIA NOSTRA

"Legio Patria Nostra" ("The Legion is our Fatherland") continues as the unofficial motto of the Foreign Legion, and this is what sets it apart from France's other armed services. Legionnaires swear an oath of allegiance to the Legion, not to France, and it is the Legion's flag and leaders that they serve. It has been this way since March 9, 1831, when King Louis-Philippe formed the Legion. Today, at the Foreign Legion recruit depot at Aubagne, there are three times more applications for enlistment than there are openings. Minimum enlistment is five years and the pay is better than ever. In addition to food, lodging, equipment and uniforms, a legionnaire now receives 750 francs (about $150) monthly.

Rules of conduct for the Foreign Legion are strict, as laid down in the regulations of August 25, 1975. For example, the movement of the men during their off-duty hours is entirely at the discretion of the unit commander, and the wearing of civilian dress, which is the usual practice with off-duty legionnaires, may also be banned by the company commander as punishment for breaking a rule. In more serious breaches of discipline, a legionnaire's monthly pay may be withheld until the end of his enlistment. The old punishments of flogging and torturous duty in a penal battalion are things of the past. Today, 60 percent of the legionnaires are foreigners, mostly Germans, Yugoslavs, Spaniards, Swiss, Italians, Portuguese, and Canadians. The Legion is a world unto itself, traditionally taking care of its own needs in a system where the hierarchy is paramount.

Below: Marseille, France. Clad in fatigues and holding rifles with needle-like bayonets attached, members of Foreign Legion rehearse a routine to tell a combat story. The group of men were part of the spectacular performed in an outdoor theatre to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the legionnaires of Camerone. (Photo Credit—UPI)

DEPLOYMENT OF THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION

Deployment of the French Foreign Legion is tailored according to regional needs of the French Army. Legion headquarters are at Aubagne in the Bouches-du-Rhone department in southeastern France—about 10 miles east of Marseilles. The old Legion headquarters at Sidi-bel-Abbes in Algeria was formally closed on September 29, 1962, and transferred to Camp de la Demande at Aubagne. Also stationed at Aubagne is the Foreign Legion First Regiment, bringing the total number of men at home base to 1,500. The First Regiment is essentially an administrative and service unit, and is the repository of all the Legion's memorabilia. It is the oldest of the Foreign Legion regiments and maintains the Legion museum and the 88-member French Foreign Legion band. New recruits are processed through the First Regiment and then sent to the Foreign Legion Instruction Regiment *(Le Regiment d'Instruction de la Legion Etrangere* — R.I.L.E.) at Castelnaudary, southeast of Toulouse.

FOREIGN LEGION INSTRUCTION REGIMENT

Until the withdrawal of the Foreign Legion from Algeria, basic training for the Legion was conducted at Sidi-bel-Abbes by the First Regiment. It was next conducted by *le Groupement d'Instruction de la Legion Etrangere* (G.I.L.E.) of the Foreign Legion Second Regiment at Corte on the island of Corsica in the Mediterranean until September, 1977. On September 1, 1977, the Foreign Legion Instruction Regiment (R.I.L.E.) was activated at Castelnaudary. R.I.L.E. consists of a regimental staff, a headquarters and services company, and three training companies—two for recruits and one for *sous-officiers* (NCOs) and other cadres. Upon completion of prescribed training conducted by the R.I.L.E. at Castelnaudary, the legionnaire next proceeds to his operational Legion unit.

FOREIGN LEGION SECOND PARATROOP REGIMENT

The Foreign Legion Second Paratroop Regiment *(LE 2eme Regiment Etrangere de Parachutistes* — 2nd R.E.P.) is based at Calvi on the northwest coast of Corsica. The 650-strong 2nd R.E.P. gained worldwide fame in May, 1978, when it conducted a daring combat air drop over the mining town of Kolwezi to rescue 2,500 white hostages held by Shaba rebels, in a Communist-instigated revolt against the Zairian government.

The 2nd R.E.P. engaged in prolonged combat during the Algerian conflict when its brother regiment, the 1st R.E.P., was disbanded after partaking in the April, 1960, *coup d'etat* against General Charles de Gaulle. It also saw action in 1956 when Anglo-French forces seized the Suez Canal from the Egyptians.

The 2nd R.E.P. is the successor of the 2nd B.E.P. (Foreign Legion Second Paratroop Battalion) which saw hard fighting and suffered heavy losses at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

As demonstrated by its recent successes in Zaire, the 2nd R.E.P. is one of the elite units of the French Army.

Above: Legionnaires question man who had attacked their patrol. They do not deal lightly with their prisoners.

Trained in airborne commando operations, the 2nd R.E.P. is part of the French Second Paratroop Brigade and is a vital component of French intervention forces. It is also highly trained in mountain warfare, including ski operations. Other commitments permitting, the 2nd R.E.P. has been designated as a potential intervention force in Djibouti should Marxist forces attack in that direction.

FOREIGN LEGION SECOND REGIMENT

Corsica is the base of the Foreign Legion Second Regiment *(LE 2eme Regiment Etrangere d'Infanterie* — 2nd R.E.I.) which has established a *Groupement Operationel de la Legion Etrangere* (GOLE) at Bonifacio on the island's southern tip. The 2nd R.E.I. GOLE force operates at battalion strength and has been trained in commando operations. Today, it has standby contingency plans for pinpoint operations in metropolitan France and the French overseas territories if and when such emergencies arise, as they did in April of 1978 in Chad.

Upon an urgent request from General Felix Malloum, President of the Republic of Chad, the French government rushed a reinforced company-strength Foreign Legion contingent from its G.O.L.E. force at Bonafacio into the northern region of strife-torn Chad, to help counter Libyan-backed Chad National Liberation Front (CNLF) insurgents. This latest Legion contingent in Chad now raises the total number of French military personnel aiding General Malloum to approximately 1,700, which includes French

Below: Legionnaires await transport out of contested area in Chad after skirmish in bush. Prisoner will accompany them for further interrogation.

Air Force units. The Legion unit is the only French ground combat force.

Legionnaires and Chad troops, with French air support, killed nearly 300 CNLF guerrillas in a three-day battle near Ati, 250 miles northeast of Chad's capital, N'Djamena. The fight took place in early June and is considered the most significant rebel defeat of the 10-year civil war. Three legionnaires were killed and one French Sepecat Jaguar fighter-bomber shot down. The rebels claimed to have killed 58 French troops. The CNLF, backed by pro-Soviet Libyan dictator, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, claims to control 80 percent of sparsely populated Chad.

Assisting the Foreign Legion contingent in Chad are the indigenous military forces under General Malloum, totalling 4,700 men, which includes three infantry/para battalions, some Panhard AML armored car units, several mortar platoons equipped with French Brandt 81mm and 120mm mortars, and an air force of 200 men which includes five aging Douglas AID *Skyraiders* of Korean War vintage, one helicopter, and 19 transports.

Two Foreign Legion companies, totalling 300 men, saw combat service in Chad, fighting the CNLF from 1969 until the summer of 1971, when they were withdrawn along with 3,200 other French military personnel. The present Legion contingent may find itself stationed in Chad for many more months.

In addition to Legion operational combat units on the African continent in Chad, Djibouti and Zaire, French intervention forces are also located in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania at the invitation of President Moktar Ould Daddah where they are actively engaged in counterinsurgency operations against the Algerian-supported Polisario Front which is armed with Soviet weapons and trained by Cuban advisors.

More than 15,000 French troops are now stationed in Africa and Lebanon, and they are stretched very thin. The Legion serves as the "cutting edge." French forces entered Mauritania in early 1977, when the Polisario Front became a serious menace. Polisario guerrillas total some 6,000 men, and their Soviet equipment includes portable surface-to-air missiles with which they've downed at least one Moroccan F-5 fighter over what was formerly known as the Spanish Sahara.

The Spanish Sahara was the old stomping grounds of the Spanish Foreign Legion, founded by General Jose Millan Astray, who remained on active duty after losing an arm, a leg, one eye, and several fingers on his remaining hand in combat (he went to Valhalla in 1954). Millan Astray's mottoes for the Spanish Legion were "Long Live Death" and "Down With Intelligence!" When Spain abandoned the Spanish Sahara in 1975, it was split between Mauritania and Morocco. The Polisario Front, headed by Edward Moha, a Moroccan Marxist of Egyptian origin, wants "independence" so it can provide Algeria with an Atlantic port.

Above: Legionnaires load on chopper for mission in Chad.

Polisario guerrillas are scattered in Mauritania, Morocco, and in northern Mali. Most of its recruits are Algerians and Libyans. General Vo Nguyen Giap visited Polisario representatives in Algiers in January, 1976. French forces in Mauritania include some small ground units plus an air force jet unit.

FOREIGN LEGION FIRST REGIMENT OF CAVALRY

Also stationed in France is the 800-strong Foreign Legion First Regiment of Cavalry *(LE 1er Regiment Etrangere de Cavalerie* — 1st R.E.C.*)*, headquartered at Orange, east of the Rhone River, in Provence, to guard Mirage IV jet bombers based near Orange and the strategic nuclear installations at the Plateau d'Albion. The 1st R.E.C. is composed of a command and services squadron, three armored squadrons, and a transport squadron. In essence, the 1st R.E.C. is one of 11 armored car regiments in today's French Army. Its armored squadrons are equipped with Panhard AML-90-7 armored cars. These wheeled vehicles weigh 5½ tons, mount a 90mm gun, carry a crew of three, and have a road range of 370 miles (600 kilometers). The 1st R.E.C. transport squadron is equipped with Dodge 6X6 and Citroen F-46 trucks.

FOREIGN LEGION 61ST MIXED ENGINEER BATTALION

Stationed at Canjuers in Provence, northeast of Aubagne, is the Foreign Legion 61st Mixed Engineer Battalion *(LE 61eme Bataillon Mixte Genie Legion)* which serves directly under the commanding general of the 7th Military Region. This battalion distinguished itself during the Indochina fighting and now operates heavy construction equipment. 200 legionnaires are presently assigned to this unit in carrying out large scale construction programs.

FOREIGN LEGION THIRD REGIMENT OF INFANTRY

Currently stationed in French Guiana, the Foreign Legion Third Regiment of Infantry *(LE 3eme Regiment Etrangere d'Infanterie* — 3rd R.E.I.*)* remains as France's principal force in South America. Headquarters and other elements of the 3rd R.E.I. are stationed at Kourou on the Atlantic coast where guard is maintained over the strategic Kourou space installation. Infantry companies of the 3rd R.E.I. are stationed at St. Jean, St. Laurent, Cayenne and Regina. Legionnaires from these units are daily engaged in border patrols and in the construction of roads through the Amazon jungle. The 3rd R.E.I. arrived in French Guiana in 1973, after having been stationed in Madagascar. Prior to that, the 3rd R.E.I. had a good fighting record in Algeria and Indochina. The last offensive action by French forces at Dien Bien Phu were carried out by legionnaires of the 3rd R.E.I. at strongpoint Isabelle, under the command of Colonel Andre Lalande, when an attack was made by 600 legionnaires on the evening of May 6th, 1954, to break out of Viet Minh encirclement. Approximately 100 legionnaires managed to pierce the Communist lines, but only eight of those survived to reach friendly forces in Laos some weeks later. These were the only men who escaped from Dien Bien Phu, which surrendered on May 7, 1954.

Above: Legionnaires armed with MAT-49 submachine guns guard African youths who had been rounded up after skirmish in arid wastes of northern Chad.

FOREIGN LEGION 13TH DEMI-BRIGADE

Facing one of the world's hot spots by the Horn of Africa, the Foreign Legion 13th Demi-Brigade *(La 13eme Demi-Brigade de Legion Etrangere* — 13th D.B.L.E.*)* is presently standing on alert in the Republic of Djibouti as the Marxist forces of Ethiopian strongman Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam and the Cuban expeditionary corps under Soviet command concentrate near the border. Following the surrender and abandonment of Algeria in 1962, the 13th D.B.L.E. was transferred to the French Territory of the Afars and Issas, which became the independent Republic of Djibouti on June 27, 1977. The 13th D.B.L.E. has remained in that nation as part of a 4,000-man French garrison to preserve its independence from the territorial claims of both socialist Somalia and Marxist Ethiopia.

Headquarters of the 13th D.B.L.E. have been at Camp de Gabode near the port city of Djibouti since October 15, 1962. Other posts of the 13th D.B.L.E. are located at Obock, Holl-Holl, and Queah, where its companies maintain daily reconnaissance patrols along the border of the small republic. The companies of the 13th D.B.L.E. are completely motorized and are supplemented with armored car platoons. This unit is well supplied with SS-11 and E.N.T.A.C. anti-tank missiles to deal with the Soviet tank threat posed by both Somalia and Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's only outside rail line to the Red Sea terminates (or begins) at the port city of Djibouti, which handles 60 percent of Ethiopia's foreign trade. That, plus Djibouti's strategic position on the Bab el-Mandeb Strait which connects the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden are the main reasons why the Communists may attempt to seize the area. Approximately 70 ships a day pass through the strait, including oil tankers and warships of various nations. In recent weeks, the number of Soviet naval vessels in the Indian Ocean has been increasing constantly with most of them cruising in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden as the flames of war in the Horn of Africa become hotter. Some 25 Soviet naval ships are now operating in the Red Sea and in the Gulf of Aden. Soviet amphibious landing craft have been assigned to transporting military supplies to Ethiopian ports. French military intelligence has information that the Soviets now have the capability of landing upward to 8,000 Russian marines or Cuban mercenaries on very short notice anywhere on the African continent.

The 13th D.B.L.E. is a highly efficient unit with a good combat record. It was activated in North Africa in late 1939 under Colonel Magrin-Verneret and it scored the first Allied victory in World War II with the capture of Narvik in April, 1940. This victory in Norway was shortlived, as the German blitz caused France to surrender. The 13th D.B.L.E. fought on, however, as part of General Charles de Gaulle's Free French Forces. It won victories in Italian Eritrea, Syria, North Africa, Italy, and France. Following World War II, the 13th D.B.L.E. fought in Indochina and at the climactic battle of Dien Bien Phu, its first battalion manned strongpoint Claudine under Major Coutant and its third battalion manned strongpoint Beatrice under Lt. Col. Jules Gaucher. During the fighting in French Indochina from 1945 through 1954, the Foreign Legion lost 10,483 killed, over 30,000 wounded, and 6,328 captured.

FURTHER LEGION DEPLOYMENT

Another Foreign Legion detachment of reinforced company strength is stationed on the island of Mayotte in the Comores Archipelago north of the Mozambique Channel in the Indian Ocean. And, of course, the 5th R.M.P. is deployed in the French "Paradise of the Pacific" which includes the Society Islands, the Tubuai Archipelago, and the Tuamotu Archipelago. Recently, a legionnaire detachment was removed from the Papeete area on Tahiti. To be posted in French Polynesia is a dream come true for many an old legionnaire veteran of North Africa. Other duties of the 5th R.M.P. include the production of electrical energy and fresh water for the Pacific Nuclear Experimental Tests Center.

NEW WEAPONS FOR THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION

Several new weapons are now under development which will be made available for the French Foreign Legion in the near future. These include the FA MAS 5.56mm rifle, now in the experimental stage, which will be made available for distribution to the French armed forces after 1979; the 63mm Grafac anti-tank rifle grenade now under development for use with the new FA MAS 5.56mm rifle; the MAS Type A (ARPAC) 72mm anti-tank free flight disposable missile launcher; and the ARPAC 68mm anti-tank periscope rocket launcher.

FA MAS 5.56MM RIFLE

The FA MAS 5.56mm rifle will significantly increase the firepower of legionnaire infantrymen in close combat. This is the first 5.56mm rifle designed in France and uses a 25-round, detachable box type magazine. Length without bayonet is approximately 29.8 inches (757 millimeters). Weight is approximately 8.14 pounds (3.7 kilograms). Modes of fire are single shot, three-round semi-automatic or full automatic. Maximum effective range is approximately 325 yards (300 meters). Muzzle velocity is

French Military Deployment In Africa

by Major John S. Arvidson

Primarily as a result of Marxist-instigated power plays inside Africa and the increasing number of Soviet, Cuban, and East German military personnel entering that continent, France has expanded its military forces in Africa to now number approximately 12,000 officers and men. French military deployment in Africa includes the following:

Chad — 1,700 men, including 200 legionnaires, assisting General Felix Malloum in counterinsurgency operations against Libyan-backed CNLF guerrillas.

Mauritania — 100 troops, mostly air force, assisting the 2,700-strong Mauritania Army in counterinsurgency operations against Algerian-backed Polisario Front guerrillas. Reinforcements may be sent in the near future.

Senegal — 1,200 men assisting the Senegalese Army in counterinsurgency operations against rebels in the Western Sahara, which include Polisario Front guerrillas who are armed with Soviet-made weapons. The French maintain the Cape Verde air base at Ouakam, Senegal, near Dakar, where a squadron of Jaguar fighter-bombers are based. The French forces include four mechanized companies involved in combat duties in northern Senegal.

Ivory Coast — 600 troops and advisors, including 400 French marines who are stationed at the Port Boet air base near Abidjan.

Gabon — 575 troops and advisors, including 300 French paratroopers stationed at Libreville.

Djibouti — 4,500 troops, soon to be reduced to 4,150 according to defense treaty specifications. This force includes 1,500 legionnaires of the 13th D.B.L.E. French Air Force strength in Djibouti includes a squadron of Mirage jet fighters and six Nord Atlas troop transports.

Reunion — a French island 440 miles east of Madagascar maintains 4,000 French naval, air force, and army personnel.

Mayotte — a French island between Mozambique and Madagascar has French naval facilities and 1,000 naval personnel, plus a Foreign Legion detachment of approximately 200 legionnaires trained in amphibious operations.

Zaire — Since the withdrawal of the 2nd R.E.P., an increasing number of French military advisors and intelligence personnel are being assigned to that nation for counterinsurgency operations against the FLNC.

960 meters per second. This weapon can be fired from either shoulder. The firing chamber is located as far back into the plastic buttstock as possible in order to reduce the length of the weapon and to increase stability with the center of gravity closer to the body. The method of operation is delayed blowback. The weapon also fires anti-tank grenades with an effective range of about 75 meters and anti-personnel grenades between 60 meters and 300 meters (indirect fire) or about 100 meters (direct fire). The magazine is to the rear of the trigger mechanism.

63MM GRAFAC ANTI-TANK RIFLE GRENADE

With the flaming grenade as the insignia of the French Foreign Legion, it is only appropriate that legionnaires should excel with both hand thrown and rifle grenades. The 63mm Grafac anti-tank rifle grenade will also be issued after 1979 as a supplementary weapon to the FA MAS 5.56mm rifle. The Grafac is launched by a special grenade cartridge and its shaped high explosive charge can penetrate 300mm of armor plate. Length of the rifle grenade is 350mm and the weight is 500 grams. It utilizes an electromagnetic impact fuse and its effective range against moving tanks is 100 meters. Maximum range against stationary or area targets is 300 meters.

MAS TYPE (ARPAC) 72MM MISSILE LAUNCHER

The MAS *(Manufacture Nationale d'Armes de Saint-Etienne)* Type A (ARPAC) anti-tank free flight disposable missile launcher is intended for anti-tank combat at ranges of 100 meters or less. The shoulder-fired missile consists of a shaped-charge warhead equipped with a point-detonating fuse and a six-nozzled rocket motor which is expelled from a small launcher by a propellant charge. This charge is only sufficient to start the missile on its flight path and has no more recoil than a rifle. Its shaped charge can penetrate 250mm of armor plate and maximum missile range is only 100 meters. It is primarily designed for fighting in built-up areas where fields of fire are severely restricted. Weight is 1.3 kilograms. Length (ready to fire) is 550mm and (transportable) 400mm. There is no flash or backblast from this weapon and it can be safely fired from an enclosed position. This weapon may be adopted shortly for limited distribution.

ARPAC 68MM ANTI-TANK ROCKET LAUNCHER

Thomson-Brandt of France is the developer of the ARPAC 68mm anti-tank periscope rocket launcher which affords a high degree of concealment for the gunner, making it possible to aim from behind a tree, wall, corner of house, window, or in a trench. The ARPAC 68mm is a one-shot weapon designed for close range use. The launcher/container is expendable and is held atop its periscopic sight. The extended periscopic arm can be directed vertically or horizontally, left or right. The weapon system, including rocket launcher, rocket, container, and accessories has a weight of 4.07 pounds (1.85 kilograms). Backblast danger area is six meters. This rocket launcher is now in the final testing phase.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LEGION

Although the French Foreign Legion has been termed a highly professional organization of losers and has been frequently employed in suicidal missions, it has a splendid history of dying hard in fighting for the accomplishment of its mission. This concept lives on today throughout every unit of the Legion. The spirit of the Legion is best exemplified by the historic action at Camerone, Mexico, of the Third Company, Foreign Regiment, on April 30, 1863, when, under the command of Captain Jean Danjou, the 65-man unit was attacked and besieged by a superior force of 2,000 Mexicans. With no hope of survival, each legionnaire took an oath to fight to the death. As the Mexicans closed in for the final annihilation, the five surviving legionnaires launched a bayonet attack. This event is celebrated every year on April 30 by Legion units wherever they may be. On April 30, 1954, it was a solemn observance in the bunkers at Dien Bien Phu. On April 30, 1978, a formal ceremony was held at Aubagne by the Foreign Legion First Regiment and the artificial hand of Captain Danjou was paraded before the formation of troops. Camerone Day reflects the spirit of the Legion and has a special place in the heart of past and present legionnaires.

OLD LEGIONNAIRES AT PUYLOUBIER

Today, one may find many old legionnaires at the annex of Puyloubier, Bouches-du-Rhone, a small village some 20 miles from Aubagne, where disabled Legion veterans are rehabilitated and where the Legion cemetery is located. This is the final resting place of General Paul Rollet, the "Father of the Legion," Prince Christian Aage of Denmark, and other Legion notables — plus numerous lesser known legionnaires. Also at Puyloubier is a printing press where the Legion magazine, *Kepi Blanc,* is printed and collated. Preparation and layout of *Kepi Blanc* is handled by the *Service Information et Historique de la Legion Etrangere* (Information and Historic Service, Foreign Legion) at Aubagne.

Continued on page 91

Practical SMG Shooting

Test Your Skill With A SMG!

The subject of which type of small arm is best for practical or combat shooting situations is often discussed in shooting circles. Whether the firearm is a rifle, pistol, or shotgun, everyone seems to have a favorite. Since many favor the submachine gun, a course of fire is needed in which the individual can test his skill with the submachine gun of his choice.

To date a really good course of fire has not been provided. Considering the example set forth by the free-style practical shooters on the West Coast two decades ago, I set out to design a course that would simulate the problem. The shooter would then be asked to solve it with his choice of subgun and technique.

First of all we must define the purpose of the machine pistol. A quote from SOF auto weapon specialist Chuck Taylor will do nicely, "Close combat with multiple targets where time is critical". All firing must be done in the full automatic mode.

Using these guidelines I set up a Practical Submachine Gun Course

Practical Submachine Gun Match

Once the course was set up, the con-

Above: Automatic weapon salesman John Wetzel runs the course with a S&W M76.

Above: Competitors found most effective method of firing SMG's was from shoulder using sights. Hip position firing scored few hits.

testants were put through their paces. John Wetzel, Wetzel Arms Co., 2005 Fernwood St., Middletown, Ohio 45042, one of our Combat Pistol League shooters and automatic weapons salesman, brought forth a variety of submachine guns for the shooters to try out. Skill levels varied from rank amateur to skilled ordnance specialist. A number of individuals with police and military backgrounds ran through the course.

This pointed out one major problem. In the United States the submachine gun is held in rather low esteem by the police and military. The accepted long arm for serious social intercourse is the short barreled 12-guage shotgun. In most other parts of the world just the opposite is true. Training techniques for submachine gun usage is rather primitive in U.S. shooting schools. Most firing techniques in police and military schools reflect the style of cinema and television heroes.

A decade ago I received instruction in submachine gun firing techniques as was then taught at the weapons MOS school run by the Special Forces Training Group, Fort Bragg, N.C. We were fond of shooting from hip level, keeping your weight on the forward leg and leaning into the gun to help control muzzle rise.

However, in match as well as in real life, the only thing that counts is hits. And shooting from the hip won't give you the hits that are needed. As Jeff Cooper has been teaching for years, if you want to hit fast and sure under stress, you had better bring the gun up to eye level. Many of the competitors tried to shoot stage three using the lead hose effect. Firing all 20 rounds across the targets in a sweeping motion only succeeded in emptying guns in record times. The most successful scored only three hits on two targets. In a real situation if the bad guys had been armed with only ice picks, our hero would

Below: Competitor cleans Stage II with Reising SMG; engaged three targets at range of 15 meters with 15 rounds on each target.

Above: Author takes out three targets in Stage II. Starts facing 90° to targets. On signal, he pivots and fires 15 rounds in 4.5 seconds. Standard "El Presidente" type course except distance has been lengthened to 15 meters.

Some competitors found MAC10 clumsy to shoulder; criticized high cyclic rate of fire.

have found out how it feels to be a pin cushion.

The submachine guns furnished by Wetzel were some of the finest examples of World War II design. 1921, 1928, and M1A1 Thompsons, H&R Reising M50, Sten, and MP40 machine pistols were present for shooters to try out. The new generation guns present were examples of some of the poorest designs around.

Ingrham MAC 10 and the Smith & Wesson M76 9mm guns were furnished simply because they are available. Both designs are a bad choice even if popular by today's standards.

The MAC 10 with suppressor is great fun to shoot. It is probably the world's nices scratch gun. But, is worthless as a serious fighting arm. It handles badly, is clumsy to shoulder quickly, the stock is a joke, and the cyclic rate is so high that I would choose it only if I expected a gunfight in a phone booth. As we expected, those who used the MAC 10 came in dead last in the match.

The S&W model 76 isn't what you would expect from a quality revolver

Below: Author at "British Ready" position prior to firing.

Below: Ohio National Guard ordnance specialist S/Sgt. John Miller with winning Stage I target. Sgt. Miller won high-overall using M1A1 Thompson.

The Practical Submachine Gun Course (P.S.C.)

Designer: Ken Hackathorn
Type: Scored 250 points
Targets: IPSC Item
Range:10, 15, & 30 meters
Rounds: 50
Procedure:
The shooter must start with only the number of rounds specified to be loaded in the magazine. Weapon is held at port arms or "British Ready." Weapon should be cocked, safety off, and finger out of trigger guard. All firing is with selector on full auto fire.

Stage 1.
15 rounds fired on one target placed 30 meters down range. Time eight seconds. This is a test of short controlled bursts.

Stage 2.
15 rounds fired on three targets spaced three meters apart 15 meters down range. Start facing 90° to targets. On signal, pivot and fire 15 rounds at the three targets in four seconds. I chose the standard "El Presidente" target set-up, except the distance is lengthened to 15 meters. This is the classical bodyguard response to a multiple assassin attack.

Stage 3.
On signal, the shooter steps out from behind a barricade and engages six targets 10 meters down range spaced one width apart. 20 rounds to be fired at all six targets in 4.5 seconds. This is a real test of speed and control.
All shots fired after the whistle will be scored as misses and targets with less than two hits on stage three will result in a five-point penalty.

maker. Obviously Smith & Wesson should stick to making revolvers. The M76 is a design copy of the Carl Gustav M45. S&W reduced the size to make it more compact, thus reducing mass and giving a much higher rate of fire. Many of the M45's better points have been changed in the M76, providing a gun of poor design and function. M76 shooters didn't do very well either, although both the Mac 10 and S&W M76 were used by experienced auto weapons shooters. Had finer examples of the new generation of submachine guns been available, things may have come out different. Had the Swedish K (Carl Gustav M45), Sterling L2A3, Uzi, Madsen M-50, Heckler and Koch MP5, or the Walther MPK been available, they would likely have been in the hands of the winners.

As it ended up, the two top places were taken with .45 Thompson submachine guns. Third place was taken by a man using a Mark II Sten. The remainder of the top 10 places were taken by shooters using the H&R Reising M50 .45 subgun.

Above: Well known gun author Rick Miller prepares to engage six "bandits" from behind barricade during Stage III. Twenty rounds to be fired at all six targets in four and one-half seconds. A real test of speed and contact.

The winner's choice of the Thompsons was not in the fact that they preferred to carry such a gun, but in the fact that the Thompsons had good sights, and a very fine feeding system that gave reliable performance during fast shooting stages. It is a good point that many do not seem to understand or appreciate, but the submachine gun needs to have good sights for fast work. They need not be fancy or even adjustable; however, you must be able to find them quickly and stay with them during firing and switching from target to target.

After the smoke had cleared and the brass was policed, we all had time to reflect on the match and what we had learned. It was agreed that if realistic training were provided, U.S. police and military personnel would see the submachine gun as a more efficient weapon. If your department or unit has access to these weapons, I suggest you try this course to check your skill level. It is a good means of evaluating different submachine gun designs. Anyone who can score 175 in this match is safe to go to the brush with. A man who breaks 200 will be a good choice to have along in a fight.

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Riding & Fighting With Grey's Scouts

The Cavalry Rides Again

by Major L.H. "Mike" Williams

Part 3 (Conclusion) Grey's Scouts

At the end of 1975, L. H. "Mike" Williams, a former U.S. Army officer with the 10th Special Forces, 77th Special Forces Group, and 101st Airborne, who had fought with Michael Hoare's mercs in the Congo in the 1960s, returned to Africa, looking for that "one last war." In Salisbury, Rhodesia, he accepted a commission as captain in the Rhodesian Army.

His first duties were to assume temporary command of troops of colored and Asian soldiers at protection companies responsible for guarding Rhodesia against terrorist incursions. Williams served briefly at 3 Protection Company, Mt. Darwin, a small Rhodesian town northeast of Salisbury, and for several months each at 5 Protection Company, which guarded the railroad and bridge at Rutenga, and at 6 Protection Company, based outside Umtali.

Williams believed that the answer to the problems of Rutenga's difficult terrain was to combine mounted patrols by day with foot patrols at night, and having received permission from headquarters and horses from a local rancher, he set out to train his troops. As a second-class ride was better than a first-class walk, he had no problem getting volunteers. Training included instructions in riding and a field expedient range to condition the horses to automatic weapons and grenade fire and the troopers to firing while running the course. The remainder of instruction was on-the-job training. Williams found that horses gave a tremendous increase in mobility.

The terrs came alive briefly on the nights of 1 and 3 July 1976, dynamiting the railroad line and derailing one train, but although Williams and his men responded immediately, the CTs (Communist terrorists) escaped into surrounding TTLs (Tribal Trust Lands).

Williams was transferred to 6 Protection Company in November. At Umtali the Brigade Commander asked him to scout out a mountainous area near the border—with horses. Williams called 5 Company and asked his sergeant major to get the horses by rail to Umtali ASAP. Following a day's rest for the horses, he and his men saddled up and moved out, heading for the "rugged terrain" they had been assigned to reconnoiter, arriving the next morning at their objective area, a large mountain too

steep to be climbed on horseback. A scout detail reported hearing voices.

Williams took two scouts and his sergeant major, leaving the remainder of the stick to cover their flanks and rear, and started climbing, keeping the ridge line between themselves and the direction from which the scouts had heard the voices. They arrived at the summit too late, since, out of SMG range, five green-clad figures were walking singlefile into the trees.

Regulations governing cross-border firing on enemy troops are very strict in Rhodesia, and unless provocation is involved, or hot pursuit necessary, no firing is allowed—but the next time the CTS crossed the border, there would be a welcoming committee waiting for them.

The reconnaissance had established that horses can negotiate most terrains and, most important of all, can deliver combat troops to an objective fresh and ready to fight.

In December 1976, Williams' unit was transferred to Rusape, a small farming community on the Umtali-Salisbury Road, and at the end of the year to Weya TTL, north of the town of Macheke. The borders of Weya TTL were contiguous with European farmlands, and although the Africans in the Weya could cross over into the farming area, farmers were forbidden to go into the TTL, a situation perfect for cattle rustling. Weya was almost totally subverted and local hostility was intense.

After two weeks of patrolling, Williams and his men rode into St. Benedict's Mission, which in the preceding year had furnished over 350 recruits to Robert Mugabe's terrorists. After an inconclusive talk with the mission priest, they rode away in a wide circle, by evening reaching the trail that ran between the mission and a clinic. It looked like a good ambush site to intercept movement from the mission to the clinic, and as the moon was coming up, Williams hurried his men.

However, they were the ones who were ambushed. In the ensuing shootout, Williams was unhorsed and fell, cracking a rib. Although no one else was injured, the horses bolted. Williams and his men regrouped and advanced toward a kraal near the ambush site. To the rear of the village at the base of a hill, a terr was firing on them. SLRs from the left flank of Williams' skirmish line answered. In the glare of the flames from the huts, several figures ran into the bush. The troops moved up the hill that overlooked the burning village and at first light swept the area. The terrs had bombshelled and their tracks disappeared into the rocks. Williams and his men walked back to St. Benedict's. They operated as infantry until the horses showed up.

Several days later, during another confrontation, Williams' ribs acted up again and he was given sick leave, boarding a plane for Jo'burg and the States.

Shortly before I left Salisbury for the States, to take some leave, the commanding officer of Protection Companies and Reserve Holding Unit called me into his office.

"Mike, when you return, you're going back to the Weya with additional mounts and troop reinforcements." His words were great to hear. I had a score to settle with the terrs in Weya and in particular there were some buildings in St. Benedict's Mission I was sure contained more terrs than nuns.

Leave, in any army, goes quickly. The month I spent in the States was no exception. My ribs were sore as hell and the medics said there would be a period of from three to five months before I would be completely fit.

Reporting back to Salisbury, I found I had more than broken ribs to contend with! Not only was I not returning to the bush as I had been promised, but in my absence the unit had been disbanded. Horses were returned to their owners and the members of the "galloping goffles" transferred to various protection companies. My "reward" was a posting to Depot, the Rhodesia Regiment at Llewellin Barracks, Bulawayo.

Llewellin is a recruit training center for the Rhodesian Army, and for 4½ months, the young Rhodesian recruit learns his trade as an infantry soldier.

By dint of much bitching, I did manage to obtain a promise from Army HQ. that my tour at Llewellin would only be for one intake; then I could go back to the bush.

Llewellin is approximately 15 miles, or so, from Bulawayo. It is, by Ft. Benning standards, a very small recruit training center. From a curriculum standpoint, however, there was very little difference between a work day at Llewellin and one at Ft. Benning.

Close order drill and manual of arms at Llewellin were British-oriented and small-unit tactics were taken from British manuals. The bulk of classroom work was handled by European NCOs with the training officer and company commander both filling in, when required, for certain subjects. I found it strange to be away from the colored and back among Europeans.

At the officers' mess, I soon discovered that the general consensus of opinion was that I would be stuck there at Llewellin for the remainder of my service with the Army. The promise I'd received from Army HQ., stating that my stay at Llewellin would be short, caused gales of laughter from listeners around the bar. I resolved to have the last laugh!

B Company or COY, as it's abbreviated, had already started on their course. I was impressed with the overall physical fitness of the average recruit in Rhodesia. Physical training is important within the Rhodesian school system. Rugby, soccer, tennis, and track are heavily stressed during secondary and higher educational levels. The system of prefects within school dormitories also lends itself well to preparing the student for military discipline later.

While I was at Llewellin, a major reorganization of the command structure within the Rhodesian Army took place. The three brigade commanders in the field were all promoted to major generals and kicked upstairs to Army HQ. The then Army commander, Lt. Gen. Peter Walls, was moved to ComOps (Combined Operations) and his place taken by Lt. Gen. John Hickman, who assumed command of the Army.

The Army, according to the briefing held at 1 Brigade HQ., was now to assume tactical control of the war. The cops, Internal Affairs, and all the other groups ostensibly would now take their orders from the Army. Although the JOCs would still continue to function as before, the senior Army officer present would assume command and the final tactical decisions would be his prerogative.

This change was deeply appreciated by the Army commanders in the field. The BSAP do a fantastic job but their prime mission is a police function. They are cops, not soldiers.

I was busy with B Coy . . . a boxing tournament drew a lot of inter-Regimental interest and we managed a second place.

The time came for B Coy's COIN (Counter-Insurgency) exercise. This was the first tactical deployment for the recruits and with it a chance to kill . . . or be killed. We moved to the Tjolotjo TTL, some two hours' drive from Bulawayo. We stayed at Tjolotjo for 10 days, killed some curfew breakers, missed eight terrs robbing a store the first night, and let the troops get their feet wet.

I do not, in any way, blame the troops for the store robbery incident. The terrs in question entered the back of the store at 10 p.m., forced the storekeeper to open the store and let them take whatever they needed. During the robbery, one of the terrs with a flashlight walked out on the porch and shined the light on the bush to see if anyone was around. The troops in the ambush detail, some 25 meters from the store, did not open fire because they didn't realize that the person with the flashlight was a terr, due to the darkness. They had been warned to strictly observe the regulations concerning firing on Africans in a curfew area. No African in a curfew area could be taken under fire unless he or she were more than 50 meters away from a kraal, hut, or dwelling place. This may restrict the troops' abilities to apprehend terrs or open fire on them, but it also prevents the killing of any innocent African who might be wandering around the kraal at night.

During the last day at Tjolotjo, I received a signal from Army HQ., transferring me to Grey's Scouts as second-in-command. There was much snarling and gnashing of teeth among those I would leave behind at Llewellin.

"Bloody Yank," "Bloody Politician," were only a couple of the fond farewell phrases. I cast no backward glances as I drove out of Llewellin's main gate. Good people, but I wanted to go back to the war.

Major Tony Stephens and I had been friends before I had been banished to Llewellin, so it was "old home week" when I reported to Inkomo Barracks, outside Salisbury. Inkomo was headquarters for the Grey's and they had built stables, a farrier shop, riding ring, kitchen, and a headquarters block out of what they had scrounged themselves.

When I reported in, Tony was getting ready to visit 1 Troop, near Inyanga, in the mountains north of Umtali. He asked me to go along with him and get acquainted with the unit.

The mountains near Inyanga are the most beautiful in Rhodesia. In more peaceful times, the Inyanga National Park provided great trout fishing. The trout were still there, but so were terrorists. Crossing sites, from Mozambique into Rhodesia, followed well-established routes. The trails used by terrs headed for the area south of Salisbury where an effort was being made to interdict the movements of Rhodesian Army supply vehicles.

Although the insurgency actions of Zanu forces followed Mao's little red book, their successes were few. Their most serious error was in the manner in which the locals were treated. Instead of cultivating the trust and respect of the locals, Zanu terrorists systematically beat, tortured, raped, and murdered tribesmen in the TTLs.

The very people whose help could have spelled success for the terrs were the targets for incredible atrocities committed by self-styled "freedom fighters."

Chairman Mao's book states that "guerrillas must swim, like fish, in a sea of peasants and farmers." In Zanu's case, their "sea of peasants and farmers" had dried up. The "K" factor again. K stands for Kaffir, an Arabic word for slave, used by bush soldiers.

In Africa, this term is heard repeatedly and explains the unbelievable screw-ups the terrs are capable of committing. Emplacing TM-46 Soviet mines upside-down is only one instance where stupidity is displayed.

After visiting with the commander of One Troop, who was preparing to attack a terrorist base camp near Inyanga, I returned to Inkomo and flew to the southeastern operational area to inspect other Grey Scouts troops. The excellent condition of the horses and the first-class equipment of Grey Scout troopers made me remember the rag-tag bobtail members of the "Galloping Goffles." What we could have done with the first line mounts and weapons I was seeing!

The NCIOC of 2 Troop was a veteran of five years in the French Foreign Legion and did a highly professional job with his people. On my arrival at their base camp, I was approached by several troopers who asked if I could get the sergeant a promotion to WOII. That's a rare occurrence when troops ask for a promotion for their commander. In addition to being a strong leader, the sergeant had done a great deal of field improvization on vehicles that saved one helluva lot of money for the Rhodesian Army.

Leaving the Gona-Re-Zhou area, I visited another troop to the north. They were conducting sweeps, patrols, and ambushes, but the terrs in that area had packed up and pulled back to the Botswana border where they had established a large base camp just inside the country. Botswana harbors, aids, and encourages terrs to attack Rhodesia. Like many other Black African countries, Botswana is nearly bankrupt and lives off UN handouts.

Major Stephens felt I should command One Troop in order that the O.C. could have some R&R. I packed my kit and flew up to the base camp One Troop had established not far from the Mozambique border. When I arrived, the wind, blowing through the Inyanga mountains, let me know it was winter. As the sun went down, so did the temperature. Bitter cold in the night brought ice and sleet . . . the pines in which the camp was sited broke a major part of the wind's force but the remaining gusts made keeping warm a high priority. The horses still wore winter coats and made me think of Mongolion ponies in North Korea.

Before he left on R&R, the lieutenant commanding One Troop fell in the troopers and introduced me. Like all good combat units, One Troop was a close knit "family." I was an outsider and as such could expect a period of "testing." How long that lasted would be up to me. I meant it to be a short time!

JOC Inyanga radioed for the lieutenant and me to report to their CP for a briefing. The ride down the mountain in an ambulance was sobering. If the troops rode horses like the driver operated that ambulance, we wouldn't last long.

We were briefed by Lt. Col. Peter Brown, JOC Commander. Col. Brown is one of the outstanding combat leaders in the Rhodesian Army. Very popular and highly respected by his troops, he is my favorite of all JOC Commanders

under whom I served. The briefing was short. Terrs were moving westward into the middle of Rhodesia and employing old former base camps as way stations, stopping for the night and moving on again at first light if possible.

We had spotter aircraft assigned and he wanted us to sweep all suspected base camps, in an effort to engage any terrs present or to burn and destroy any supplies or caches found.

On our return to the CP, the lieutenant asked one of the farriers to get me a mount. I didn't have time to check out the horse, much less ride him, so I guessed the following day would be a busy one.

Riding a strange horse into a combat situation is not asking for trouble . . . it is guaranteeing it!

Troops and horses were loaded and vehicles moved out at first light for the trip down the mountain and to the assembly area. I was to go with the command element and observe the lieutenant. We were assigned five base camps to sweep . . . with only one exception they were all sited either on top of a kopje or in the saddle formed by two peaks. The approach climb to each of them was going to be the most challenging part of the operation.

Long before first light on the following morning, troopers were up. Horses, kicking, snorting and bucking, were loaded on vehicles; ammo, mortars, machine guns, and grenades issued and radios checked. Out of the apparent chaos, order emerged and the convoy started moving down the road, snaking its way toward the assembly area at the foot of the mountain. Breakfast had been eggs, bacon, thick slices of bread, and cups of steaming tea or coffee.

Pre-combat meals are a matter of individual tastes. Some people can gorge themselves. My butterflies usually limit my stomach to coffee and a chunk of bread. The sun grew warmer as we approached the de-bussing point and assembly area. I had chosen to ride in the lead vehicle and, looking behind me, could see the dust clouds stirred by the HCVs (horse-carrying vehicles). We pulled up on the side of the road at the intersection of a small trail leading toward the first suspected base camp. A guide was waving to us and pointing to a designated off-loading point.

As I dismounted from the truck's cab, the HCVs were turning off the road and backing into positions, their cargoes of horses looking on with eyes that had seen this drill hundreds of times in the past.

The Troop commander came over to me and we double-checked the map, making certain there were no last minute misunderstandings as to approach routes or terrain features marking boundaries between call-signs. He checked his radio with JOC Inyanga and the individual call-sign commanders who were getting their troops and horses unloaded and sorted out.

"Major, if you would, stay with me and the Command element." It was his show and my first time out with these people. He would have enough on his mind without worrying about me. Speaking of first time out . . . I felt a tug on my sleeve and turned to face a corporal who handed me the reins to a black gelding.

"Sir, this is Beguta, your mount." I looked up at Beguta. He looked down at me. Seventeen hands of horse with a hammerhead and hooves that couldn't fit into pie plates. In any horse cavalry

unit, world wide, it is standard practice to give an incoming C.O. the meanest mount in the outfit. This, with the fervent hope that all and sundry would have the rare opportunity of watching the new commander fly ass-end over tea kettle. I checked cinch and stirrup leather lengths. At least I would be ready for whatever Beguta was going to try.

"All right . . . mount up!" The lieutenant gave the signal and troopers swung into saddles, moving up from the road onto the faint trail cutting through waist-high dusty grass. Here goes nothing, I thought, and put my left foot in the stirrup. The point detail and flankers were already moving off at a trot, dust kicking up under their hooves.

Beguta moved after them with me switching my grip on the FN, changing it to my right hand and shortening up on the reins with my left. That change in grip on my rifle proved to be a smart move. Beguta, seeing the point detail trot off, seized the momentary slack in the reins to rocket after the other horses. Trying to hold that sonofabitch with a snaffle bit was tantamount to reining in a bull elephant with a piece of string. Winding up the reins on my left hand like a ball of knitting yarn, I gave friend Beguta a sharp jerk that checked, but didn't completely stop, his charge.

"Alpha one, this is Alpha . . . do you read?" the lieutenant glanced over at me as I pulled up next to him. He tried his radio again, this time raising the corporal commanding the point.

"Roger, Alpha, this is one, read you 5's, how me?"

"Five's, Alpha one . . . any sign?"

"Negative, we're sending figures three locals back to you . . . no situpas."

The situpa is a required form of identification carried by all Africans except for females and children. Absence of identification doesn't necessarily mean that the individual is a terrorist; a lot of terrs carry legitimate ID, but no situpa is a good sign that interrogation will usually come up with some useful intelligence.

A hundred meters ahead of us, three Africans burst from the bush, hands over their heads. All three were teenagers, likely suspects. Running towards us, faces wet with sweat, their eyes never left our FNs. The lieutenant motioned them to the rear, where they would be met by Intelligence officers for interrogation.

Ahead of us, the ground's slope rose sharply, forming the base of the mountain on whose peak we would find the terrorist base camp. Dusty grass gave way to scrubby underbrush and a series of hand-constructed stone fences, some waist-high. I could make out the members of the point detail, several hundred meters to our front, as they approached the first kraal and started searching the huts. Several Africans popped out of a hut, hands over their heads, and were searched by two troopers who motioned for them to start towards us. Trotting down the slope, the locals would be added to the previous group at the interrogation point.

As I watched the group approaching at a run, I wondered how many picanins were now doing the same thing, only running towards the base camp to warn the terrs of our presence. We would soon find out.

We started moving again.

Beguta was stepping along smartly, tossing his head and trying to hit me in the face with the top of his skull.

The point detail was now replaced with an equal number of troopers from

the rear of our formation. They cantered by, leather working, water bottles thudding against their sides, sweeping through and around the village to provide perimeter security for the advancing column as we started up the side of the mountain. We now were forced to ride over increasingly rocky ground, the horses stumbling and sending small avalanches of rocks tumbling down the slope to our rear.

If the terrs were in the base camp, this would be a good time for them to open up on us with mortars, RPDs and AKs, if their combat outpost people were alert.

There was no way we could approach quietly now; the rustle of bushes, clang of horseshoes on rock and the intermittent snorts of the horses as they lunged upward were deafening. At least so it seemed to me.

The heavy underbrush started to thin out and I could make out the beginnings of a faint trail, zigzagging upward toward the top of the mountain. We moved off to the left and right of the trail, beginning the ascent.

Beguta decided he had had enough of staying with the rest of the horses, climbing in a staggered line of skirmishers. Grabbing a mouthful of bit he scrambled up, ahead of the line of lathered mounts.

Although the slope was now steep enough to slow the advance of even the strongest horse, Beguta went up the mountain like a squirrel up a tree.

"Goddamit, hold up," yelled the lieutenant as the gelding roared past him. Useless words! I had slung my FN over my right shoulder and pulled the .44 Magnum from my holster. If I was going to get shot at, I damned sure didn't want to screw around with a long-barrelled rifle in this type bush. Snorting, grunting, sweating, and farting, the gelding carried me to the top of the mountain, bursting into the clearing where the huts of the base camp stood. I fully expected to be met with a hail of AK fire full in the face.

Still no sign of any terrs.

There were five huts, hastily erected and crudely camouflaged with pieces of branches. The sides of the mountain were so steep that the terrs would have little concern with anyone approaching with any degree of stealth. Moreover, the last 100 meters from the huts was covered with shale, rocks, and small stones. To approach over this terrain would be suicide; the resultant noise would alert the entire camp. The remainder of the call-sign caught up with me and we searched the huts.

Whatever terrs had been in the camp were now hotfooting it towards Mozambique. We stopped, dismounted, loosened girths, and let the horses blow before we started down. There were still four more camps to search and the sun was getting up towards noon. Going back down the other side of the mountain proved to be a helluva lot harder than going up! It was impossible to ride the horses down, so each man had to lead his mount, the trooper carefully picking a path that would accommodate both him and horse. Rumps tucked under them, forelegs scrambling to find purchase in the shale, each mount started down, his rider cursing, stumbling, trying to stay clear in the event of a sudden tumble that would put a horse squarely on top of him.

I didn't look behind me, because I could hear Beguta's snorts and knew if I took my eyes off the ground in front of me, it would result in my falling. The prospect of one of those pie-plate-size

hooves landing on my skull increased my speed.

When we got to the bottom of the kopje, we mounted up and turned north in the direction of the second base camp. The bush began to thin out and we started moving more rapidly, the troops spreading out and advancing by alternate bounds.

A small kraal consisting of only six huts shielded the next terr camp from our line of march. Several thin columns of blue smoke rose from the kraal.

"Alpha . . . Bravo one."

"Bravo one, Alpha . . . got you five's."

"Alpha, we've got five cooking fires still hot."

"Bravo one, any spoor?" The lieutenant was studying the scene through binoculars. He turned and handed them to me. Through the glasses I could see a small group of locals, standing next to a series of black pots hung over fires.

"Affirmative, but they've bombshelled and headed into the rocks, over."

The lieutenant called in the spotter aircraft, giving him directions of flight taken by the terrs and requesting the pilot to orbit the area to locate the running CTs.

While the aircraft circled the area, I rode up to the cooking fires. A sullen group of locals stood next to the black pots. It was obvious that enough food for 15 people was being prepared. It was useless to interrogate the Africans standing by the pots.

"Aren't you going to destroy these huts and move those locals to PVs?" I asked the troop commander.

"I'll have to check it with JOC," he answered and contacted Inyanga.

"Negative, repeat negative. Do not burn those huts," came the reply. I looked at the lieutenant and saw that his expression was the same as mine.

Unless the terrorists' source of food supplies is removed, denying him rations, you cannot expect to seriously hamper his operations.

Leaving the locals with the food, we started the remaining part of search and destroy.

You have to ride on patrol with the Grey's to fully appreciate the tremendous mobility the horses furnish. In many instances terrs are successful in outdistancing infantry units, but there is no way any terr is going to outrun an element from Grey's Scouts.

The day wore on, the sun got hotter, and we continued searching. All we got for our pains were lathered horses, sweaty brows, and sore asses. No matter! Our presence was causing the CTs to run, keeping them moving, and hopefully making them break to a new base camp we could locate. This war is truly a cat-and-mouse affair.

We searched the remaining base camps and with the exception of scattered items of clothing found no signs of CTs.

As I dismounted and handed the reins to a trooper, I relaized that I missed the "goffles" and wondered if I'd made the correct decision in coming to the Grey's. At least the terrs in the southeastern operational area would fight before they ran.

The lieutenant had a quick debriefing at the assembly area, then loaded horses and troops on waiting vehicles, and started back up the mountain to the C.P.

It was growing dark by the time we arrived and with the setting sun, came

the drop in temperature, increasing wind, and bitter cold. In addition to the fatigue of animals and men, there was a sense of frustration.

Although normally the ratio of kills to dry runs was high, this war did produce a certain amount of impatience on the part of combat troops. We would have preferred going into Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana, knocking the hell out of the raggedy-assed, self-styled "freedom fighters," and totally destroying every damned base camp in existence.

The troop commander and I were having a cup of tea when the duty signaller stuck his head out of the CP tent and yelled, "Sir, JOC wants to talk to you." The message we received from the JOC Commander stated that we were to report back to his HQ. the following morning.

Walking back to the fire, shoulders hunched against the gusts of cold wind, we speculated on the purpose of the briefing. It seemed highly unlikely there were any further base camps in the area and we hoped it would be something that would give us a chance to get our hands on some CTs.

"See you in the morning, Major Mike, I'm going to put my head down." I watched him disappear into the darkness.

The fire died out and I could hear the prowlers, troopers assigned perimeter security details, checking their radios. With this cold, they wouldn't have any trouble keeping awake.

Unzipping my sleeping bag, I decided to leave my boots on. A damned good thing I did. Two bright green flares arched high in the air about 800 meters to our southeast in the general direction of the airstrip. Their light illuminated the entire camp as the wind blew them toward us.

Before the order, "Stand To," was given, troopers were struggling out of sleeping bags, and bed rolls, running to their fire pits. The pucker factor was high and I expected incoming mortars to blast our ass off within minutes. Because of the thick woods between us and the airstrip, it was difficult to make a range estimate.

"Zero, this is Five, over."

"Roger, Five, Zero, go." I was glad the radio worked. Miracle . . . radios in all armies work when they feel like it.

"Zero, we've had figures two green flares approximately 800 meters southeast of our position." I put the directions in code, so the terrs monitoring our transmissions couldn't use them as an aid in adjusting morter fire.

"Request permission to put mortars on that area." I wished a few seconds later, that I had fired first and told JOC about it afterwards.

"Negative, do not fire. We don't want the trees to burn."

Shit, what a way to fight a war.

"Keep us informed, over." I stood looking at the radio, feeling like an idiot.

"Roger, out." The lieutenant stood at the side of the tent, watching me.

"No mortars . . . we'll have to send out a patrol."

I rounded up six men, took a radio and moved out, warning the prowlers that we would contact them when we started back.

"Don't zap us," the corporal with the radio said as we passed the last prowler. It was absolutely pitch black with little or no illumination from the stars. We

stumbled along, carefully placing our boots to avoid branches and potholes formed by cattle tracks. Two hours later we returned. No contact, no sound except for the wind whipping tree tops. I had the troop stand down and we spent a restless night.

I felt the CT flares were meant as an "all clear" signal, fired by a scout element who preceded a larger group enroute from Mozambique into Rhodesia.

Another patrol was dispatched the next morning to the air strip to check for spoor. Tracks of approximately six were found but soon lost due to rocky ground.

"Let's see what they've got," I told Lt. Cawood as he cranked up the Landrover and wheeled it out on the dirt road, heading once again down the mountain. Regardless of what it was, his R&R would start today, giving him a 10-day break.

The briefing was short and to the point.

"I want you to move from your present position to Rusape." Col. Brown pointed to the situation map. "A stay-behind element will start a cross-country sweep in your direction to see if they can flush any Charlie Tangos." He looked at the sergeant major I'd brought with me.

"Who'll be in command of the recon group?"

The NCO pointed to himself.

"O.K., Sergeant Major, you'll contact Major Williams when you're ready to move out . . . by that time he should have stop groups in place."

"Sir, what about aircraft?" I wanted some eyes in the sky.

"We'll see what we can do but no promises." Col. Brown pointed to a TTL to the west of Weya. "The CTs in this area are cheeky. They've ambushed two Intaf (Internal Affairs) patrols, fired on the camp housing the district commissioner, and planted mines along the road between the camp and town."

I had hoped, when I heard Rusape, that I would get another crack at St. Benedict's Mission and Weya, but Col. Brown dashed that hope.

"I don't want anything done to the mission near the Intaf camp. Army has given me a direct order and I know you won't put me in the shit, Mike." He smiled but there was no doubt in anyone's mind that he meant exactly what he said.

"We won't let you down, sir," I said and stood up from the bench next to the map board.

"Any questions?"

"No, sir." We saluted and left. Cawood's R&R started when we walked out of the building and I saw him off to Umtali. As he started to drive away, I yelled for him to leave me one of his Labrador retrievers, but he shook his head and said they both had R&R coming, and wouldn't appreciate being left behind.

As we started the Landrover, I told the sergeant major to raise our CP on the radio and have them begin loading vehicles for the move.

The camp was partially struck when I drove up and the sergeant major hopped out, taking charge of the loading. He would command the convoy while I preceded it to Rusape and reported in to the Sub-JOC Commander.

It's not a long drive from Inyanga to Rusape; the road is first class and I made good time, arriving a little before tea time. There were the same faces at Rusape that I had known from my previous tour there with the goffle cavalry. Needless to say, there weren't any brass bands out to meet us. Obviously the prospect of having more horse soldiers in the area didn't fill them with joy! This was basically a cop-oriented JOC with the police providing the bulk of troops and exercising strong control over operations that were mounted from that command post. We were lucky and managed to obtain a bivouac area on a local ranch some 15 Ks to the south of Rusape. Plenty of water, graze, and paddocks for the horses; a good area for vehicle turn around, ready access to a hard surface road, and an airstrip made this an excellent company C.P.

We were out of the mountains now and away from the bitter cold. All in all, I felt it was a change for the better.

Technically, I would be under the control of Sub-JOC Rusape since we would be operating in their zone of responsibilities. Col. Peter Brown, at JOC Inyanga, would issue my actual orders, however, and that made me feel a lot better. I knew the cops hadn't forgotten my last visit to Weya with the colored. Rusape would act only as a radio relay station.

We had a day's rest before I had to start to work.

This war is like fighting 10 rounds; you have to pace yourself or it's possible to really punch yourself out in the early rounds.

The commander at Rusape briefed me the following morning. We were to execute a search and destroy mission in an area surrounding the Intaf camp at Danda TTL, about six hours' drive northwest of Rusape. A light aircraft had been assigned and would be on station overhead when we moved out from the Intaf camp.

The terrain over which we would operate was good horse country. Open, rolling hills with scattered bush. There were a few large kopjes that I knew would be used as observation posts by the CTs (communist terrorists), giving them a 360 degree view of the countryside. Once again we were faced with the prospect of traveling over dirt roads in a TTL.

Soviet TM-46 land mines are the standard weapon used by terrorists against Rhodesian security forces. Very effective, they are, however, vulnerable to anti-mine operations by Army and engineers, but the biggest break we had was our old friend, the "K" factor. One instance, involving this phenomenon, was the planting of a TM-46 by three so-called "freedom fighters." After carefully digging a hole in the road, gingerly placing the mine in position, and covering it with earth they suddenly realized they had forgotten to tamp down the soil. Joining hands, they began jumping up and down on the mound of earth, heavy boots packing the soil over the detonater. The resulting explosion blew all three into the top branches of a nearby baobab tree.

We arrived at the Intaf camp late in the afternoon, unloaded the horses, dispersed the vehicles, and got comfortable for the night.

I spoke with the T/F Rifle Company commander who had his command post inside the Intaf admin block. He was pulling out the following day. His patrols had come up empty handed, but spoor was present and it was evident the locals were hiding the CTs as usual.

Some maps in Rhodesia are old and subject to errors. It's always best to obtain local knowledge before crashing off into the bush.

One of the Internal Affairs officers discussed the area between our camp and the objective. Using a pencil, he drew a line on my map, indicating a road suitable for the HCVs that would get us to the assembly area I'd selected. That evening after the dinner meal, I briefed the call-sign commanders. After covering the important tactical points, I warned them about the Catholic mission in the area, and repeated what Col. Peter Brown had told me.

Under no circumstances were we to enter the mission grounds or have any contact with the priest.

"Sir, what are we going to do if we cut spoor that leads into the mission?" I looked at the corporal and shook my head.

"If we do find spoor, I'll get on the blower back to JOC Inyanga, and from there it's up to them to make a decision." The looks that passed among the troopers reflected my own feelings. What a fucked-up way to fight a war!

It is common knowledge among all combat troops in the Rhodesian Army, who risk their lives in the bush daily, that the bulk of the Catholic missions are not only sympathetic to the CTs, but are feeding, harboring, and assisting them.

The next morning at 0730, we were loaded, vehicles lined up on the road, waiting for the arrival of our spotter aircraft. He was supposed to be on station overhead at 0745.

At 0900, there was no sign of any aircraft. I figured the hell with it, and gave the signal to move out. About 10 Ks down the road, he caught up with us. An impeccable Oxonian voice came over the radio, assuring us that everything was well since he was there. I was im-

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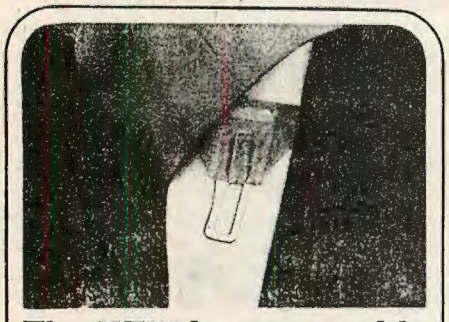

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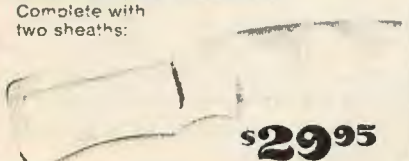

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mediately overwhelmed. Good show, pip-pip, etc.

The pencil line the Intaf official had drawn on my map was just that. Any resemblance between it, as a road, and the goat trail we were now crashing and banging over was purely coincidental. I stopped the vehicles, unloaded horses and troops, and mounted up. Scouts and flankers out, we started toward the objective marked by a large kopje to the west. The terrain was rolling and broken, marked by an occasional *donga*, or deep gulley. Scrub and underbrush dotted the open fields. *Mombies*, African cattle, scattered at the sight of the horses.

"Alpha, this is Mike," the 60mm mortar crew was calling.

"Roger, Mike, read you fives." I pulled up, for a moment, so I could read his transmission.

"Alpha, we're in position." They were to use the thick bush on the forward slope of the kopje. The objective was a kraal on the south side of a dry stream bed some 300 meters from the hill.

While we were approaching the river bed with the assault group, three call signs forming stop groups had detached from the main body, moving through heavy bush to take up blocking positions to stop CTs attempting to run.

"Alpha, this is Bravo." The Oxford accent again. I looked up and finally spotted him, flying in circles overhead. Unfortunately, he was at an altitude of about 5,000 feet. This put him well out of small arms range in case some gook with an AK wanted to try his luck, but made him useless to me.

"O.K., Bravo, got you fives, what's your problem?"

"I say, old chap, there are figures five locals running to the west."

"Roger, how's about you dropping down and indicating their direction to Blue One," I asked, hoping he would help that call-sign get on the terrs.

"Negative, Alpha, we'll stay up here and direct the operation, out." Great, now we had the air force running the show. Shit and two makes four! Worse was yet to come!

The British Empire flew on, in graceful circles a mile in the sky.

"Sgt. Olivier, dismount here," I ordered, pointing to an area of thick bush; we got off and tied the animals. The river bed was visible 50 yards ahead.

"Mike, this is Alpha, commence firing, over."

"Roger, Alpha, on the way." A few seconds later there was a hollow thump from the kopje and we hit the prone, burying our noses in the sand, waiting for the incoming round. Ka-blam! A shower of dirt mixed with roof thatching sailed in view at the far side of the kraal.

The second round was short. Was it ever! 25 yards in front of where we were talking to the ants, a shower of sand, rocks, and branches exploded. Shards of metal whirred past our heads. Goddamn!

"Hello, Mike, Bravo heah . . . good shooting, old chap, drop figgahs twofiyev." I grabbed the mike.

"Negative-negative! Disregard!" I was panting, bracing myself for the next round.

"Mike this is Alpha . . . If you drop two five, the next one will be in our hip pocket."

"Mike, Bravo heah . . . I say again, drop two fiyev."

"Bravo, this is Alpha . . . get off the fucking air."

"I say, you chaps, you simply must watch your radio procedure."

"Mike, this is Alpha . . . do not, repeat, do not take any further fire direction from anyone but me!"

"Roger D, Alpha, understand. Next round, add five zero."

I was half-laughing, half-pissing, sweat soaking my face. We'd damned near bought the farm from our own people, thanks to the air force.

The next three rounds in succession blew hell out of the kraal. Weith smoke from a last HE round, drifting in a dirty grey cloud toward us, we got up, checked the bush on the opposite river bank and started across the sand. Halfway there, the trooper at the left of the skirmish line cut loose with a Zulu, the rifle grenade arching over the bushes and exploding against the side of the nearest hut.

There was a flurry of movement in the scrub and Sgt. Olivier's Uzi started firing. I wend down and lined up on the bushes, squeezing off double-taps, aiming at about knee height.

In the midst of the fourth round, three big crazy-ass roosters with a harem of four hens madly sauntered right through the hail of 7.62 rounds, contentedly pecking at corn husks lying on the sand.

We jumped up, then ran through the line of huts, throwing WP grenades in two of them that contained pieces of terr clothing. Cooking fires were still burning, food in the pots. Same story.

We found spoor of eight on the far side of the kraal. They'd bombshelled, as usual.

The intrepid aviator had flown off, apparently back to Rusape.

"Sir, d'you want to follow up on this spoor?"

Sgt. Olivier pointed to the tracks leading towards the next suspected base camp.

"Hell, yes, let's see if we can catch those buggers." I didn't feel as confident as I sounded.

By the time we had mounted up, started tracking and closed on the next kraal, the locals would have received the CT, fed him, circled their *mombies* obliterating all tracks, and the terr would be in a neighboring kraal, shacking up with one of the nannies.

We started, nonetheless.

As I'd expected, that's precisely what happened. We followed the spoor to a large kraal, where the tracks disappeared in a welter of *mombie* hoofprints. The locals had driven the cattle in circles over the spoor.

Under questioning, the village headman knew nothing about any terrs. He knew nothing about any tracks, in spite of my showing them to him. In short, he knew nothing.

In a pig's ass.

After sweeping the kraal, we picked up some suspects without situpas and returned with them to the HCVs for the return trip home.

Several items of terr clothing were recovered during a search of the other base camps, and a feeder was turned up.

Sgt. Olivier found a nanny who admitted she'd fed eight CTs the night prior to our arrival. She joined the other suspects for a ride to the cops.

Three days after entering Danda TTL, we'd finished with the search and started back to Rusape.

"Sir, we got a signal from Inkomo . . . they want you to report there ASP." Trooper Hill handed me a message copy, when I jumped down from the HCV.

The signal gave no reason but I'd learned long ago never to try second-guessing Headquarters. This trip, however, proved to be the first leg of my journey out of the Rhodesian Army.

Salisbury has its "Embassy Row." Belgravia is a stately older section of the city, housing the South African Embassy, military attaches' residence and other imposing houses.

At number 2, Ross Avenue is the "unofficial U.S. Embassy"; more accurately, it is an expensive double-story brick, owned by Robin Moore, author of *The Green Berets, French Connection* and *The Happy Hooker.* More than any other American, Robin Moore has given of his time, money, and influence to help Rhodesia. His home was a "little bit of the States" for the Americans serving in the Rhodesian Army.

On Saturdays and Sundays, there was normally a barbecue with hamburgers, fries, and beer for the Americans who would drop in. There were also the itinerant journalists. Ben Rothman was one.

Using the name of a long-time friend from Robin's Vietnam days, Rothman ingratiated himself with the personnel in the "Embassy."

Robin introduced Rothman to me and to other Americans serving in the Rhodesian Security Forces.

"Major, I'd really like to go on patrol with you," he begged.

"I don't have any authority to take you anywhere . . . any newspaperman here has to go through proper channels—Army PRO and ComOps." I drained my beer and left.

I didn't like him. There was a ferret-like furtiveness about him . . . maybe the pasty face or little pimp moustache.

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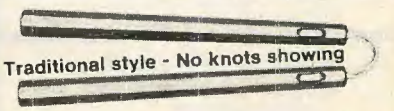

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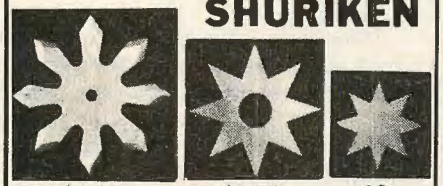

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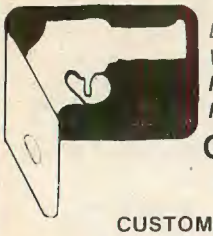

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What the hell, he wasn't my problem.

How little I knew.

I put Ben Rothman out of my mind. There were big things afoot.

For the first time, Grey's Scouts would operate as a squadron, giving me full tactical command of all troops. This would make things far more effective from a combat standpoint with centralization of command.

The Squadron Headquarters was at Lupane. This was Matabele country. Descendants of Zulus, the Matabeles were warriors with no fear of whites. Their forefathers massacred Alan Wilson's cavalry column on the Shangani River, north of Lupani, during the 1897 uprising. It was eerie to ride over the same ground which Alan Wilson's troop of horsemen had covered 80 years before.

Grey's Scouts had ridden in that war, but this time our enemy was to prove white instead of black. Before I left Inkomo to report to my Lupane HQ. a telephone call from Army moved me further down the road to civvy street.

"Mike, this is Richard Brannard." It was the Army Public Relations Official.

"Cheers, Richard, what can I do for you?" I knew it would be some hassle with a visiting V.I.P.

"Ben Rothman has been approved by Army and ComOps. I want you to take him to Lupane and show him around."

"Dick, that guy's no good. I've been warned by some people close to Intelligence to watch out for him."

"Don't worry. He's been cleared and HQ. are happy with him. You're to pick him up at the Rhodesia *Herald* Building at 11:30. Cheers." The phone clicked off. At 11:30, my Landrover, with Cpl. Ed Wandell, an ex-Marine from Chicago, my driver, and myself pulled up across from the Rhodesia *Herald* building, next to the Park. I spotted Rothman, talking with a young black festooned with cameras. Seeing the vehicle with soldiers in camouflage uniforms, the African trotted away toward the *Herald's* offices.

"You're right on time." Rothman smirked as I motioned him into the rear of the Landrover.

"Your kit's in the back." I'd told him that I wouldn't detach any of my people to act as wet-nurses. If Army wanted him to take combat footage, he'd damn well have to pull his own weight. That included riding a horse, because I couldn't see his spindly little shanks on a 5'5" frame keeping up with a call-sign at a canter. Maybe he could wiggle his moustache and go airborne.

We stopped in Bulawayo to spend the night. There was still a 3½-hour ride left the next morning.

The Landrover dropped me off at the Holiday Inn.

"Give this little peckerwood V.I.P. treatment, corporal. Get him drunk, get him laid, whatever. I don't want Army on my ass, howling that he hasn't been treated right." I glanced at Rothman sitting in the back of the vehicle.

"For God's sake, don't let him blow his foot off with that Uzi."

"Don't worry, sir. He'll be fucked out come tomorrow."

Wandell laughed, shifting gears, and screeched off. I looked at poor Rothman's pin head. A cold coke and a hot piece of ass would kill him!

The next morning, a bleary-eyed Rothman, pimp-moustache at half-mast, hound-dawg eyes peering through thick glasses, stared glassily at me as I climbed into the Landrover.

"He's puked twice on the way over," smiled Wandell.

"Marvelous." I settled down for the ride to Lupane.

40 klicks or so out of Bulawayo was a cop roadblock.

After we'd passed it, I turned to our journalist and yelled, "From here on it's terr country. If we get zapped, don't shoot me through the back of this cab." Rothman shook his head, looking at the bush on either side of the road. When we pulled up to the CP, located in a farmhouse, I got Wandell aside.

"Stick with this little fart. Don't let him out of your sight. Show him anything he wants to see, but do not let him in the ops room or around the sit map."

"Roger, sir." The corporal trotted after his charge, who was headed for the horses, milling around in a paddock next to the house.

Number Three Troop was at Sipepa, some 60 Ks to the southeast of us. 2/Lt. Tom Dailey was the Troop commander . . . 19 years old. I had helped him get his "feet wet" on the Botswana border at Myadumbudzi. Tough, confident, he was popular with his troops, and never shirked a fight.

"Tom, I'm sending Rothman to you. Show him whatever he wants, but watch him. I think he'll screw us if he can," I warned the young officer.

After briefing Rothman, I told him to follow Dailey, who was walking out to his Landrover. When they drove off, I put the newsman out of my thoughts. There was a rash of bus robberies in the Lupane TTL. Normally this would be the responsibility of the cops, but unfortunately, the poor buggers had damned little to work with, so the monkey was on my back. I had no intention of running all over Lupane TTL looking for terrs. Instead, we started riding the buses, a la Deadwood Stagecoach style.

The robberies stopped.

I'm glad, because I was too damned old to ride on a goddamn African bus with a shotgun, trying to find some asshole Kaffir with an AK trying to play Jesse James.

After about two weeks, friend Rothman pitched up at the CP. With him was a bemused Sgt. Keenan, who said, "Sir, that photographer just kicked a suspect in the head twice, then heated

the bottom of a bottle and stuck it on the hout's chest."

Ginger-peachy. That's all I needed!

The next morning at 0230, we mounted an assault group in force against a base camp across the Shangani River. I had a terr prisoner who'd been a member of an 18-man-strong gang presently occupying the camp. Rothman wanted to go along.

"Major, I want some real combat footage." Shades of Matthew Brady!

"O.K., stay with me." I crawled up in the cab of the HCV and we took off up the dirt road leading to the base camp area. After de-bussing and saddling up, I put the terr in front of me. He stayed on his horse, and when we reached the Shangani suddenly banged his heels into his mount's flanks. The gelding took off, cantering, then running for the bridge, spanning the dry riverbed.

"Stop that sonofabitch." I couldn't yell for help, and I was the only one near. Shit! I was riding Pinky, a little mare who could run, but we were falling behind the CT who was riding for his life!

I had a .44 Magnum in a belt holster and pulled it out, throwing down on the rapidly disappearing terr.

"Shoot him—shoot him." It was that crazy Rothman, tearing alongside me, cameras wildly banging around his neck.

I couldn't help laughing at the wild look on his face. This was a far cry from the streets of New York.

"You stupid ass . . . d'you want every CT in 10 miles alerted?"

A black figure darted past me. It was Moyo, an African district assistant we'd borrowed from the local D.C. as a tracker. Outriding all of us, he reached the terr, grabbed his reins and jerked the CT's horse to a halt. Great beginning.

We arrived at the assembly area beneath the kopje housing the terr base camp at 0430. Cpl. Wandell set up 60mm mortars and I went over the attack plans with the call sign commanders.

"Rothman, if you want some footage come with us," I whispered, pointing to the figures of the assault group.

"I . . . uh, would rather get some pictures of the horses." He fiddled with his camera and wandered off to where the horses were. At 0455 the first mortar round hit the top of the hill and we moved out. It was cold and damp, the grass soaking my camos as I scrambled up the hill. Moving from rock to rock, we ran out of cover as first light just started to outline the black tree trunks. Four more HE rounds crumped into the hilltop. Up and running the last 25 meters, we now were using recon fire at likely ambush sites, the orange-red tracers ripping into the thick bush.

"That bastard . . . they're gone," panted Sgt. Olivier, chest heaving. No terrs.

We 360ed the camp, then stumbled back down the hill. I thought seriously of blowing the CT prisoner's head off. That Magnum was such a fine weapon.

Rothman took what seemed to be 97 dozen feet of film going back. Horses, troopers, kraals, houts, goats and nannies. He stuck with me two more weeks.

"Get Acorn over here for me, please." I had had enough. I waited, while the cops got the Intelligence representative. "Get on to JOC Wankie and see if they'll do something about this photographer," I asked the SB Cop when he arrived.

"Sure thing."

Within an hour, the SB rep and the 2I/C from JOC Wankie landed at our airstrip. They had a short talk with Rothman that terminated in all three crawling into the Islander aircraft and flying off to Salisbury. Once again I forgot Ben Rothman.

"Major, Brigade wants you, ASP." The duty signaler pointed to his headset. I got on the set to Brigade and spoke with the commander.

"Report back here tomorrow, out." Short but not very sweet.

Brigade Headquarters on Bulawayo had that cardboard Brigadoon air of every HQ. I'd seen in Rhodesia. Out of the bush, that is!

"Mike, what do you know about any skull-bashing by your troops at Sipepa?" The Colonel was serious. He was a damned fine soldier and a straight shooter.

"Sir, I don't know a damn thing . . . I haven't heard of any hassles except one involving Ben Rothman, an AP photographer." I frowned. "One of my sergeants told me he'd kicked and burnt a hout suspect."

"O.K. Keep me posted though." I was dismissed and left the office, walking out into the bright sunshine. My R&R was long overdue and I was looking forward to spending some time in civilization.

Once again, I flew back to the States. Really tired this time, my ribs were bothering me again, and I found it was difficult to rest on my right side.

When I returned to Rhodesia, the feces was in the fan! A series of photos had hit the international press like a bomb. Rothman, evidently bored with nothing to photograph at Sipepa, had talked the members of one call-sign into posing some Africans in a push-up position, gotten one of the troopers to put a rope around a suspect's neck, and taken a snap of Lt. Dailey holding a small baton, with an African in the background. "These pictures tell a terrible story," the lead read in one paper. Obsessed with what they call "World Opinion," the Rhodesian government and the Army in particular, went bananas.

I found myself at Army HQ. getting a royal ass-chewing for all types of naughty antics . . . these included such heinous crimes as patting a sexy brunette on the snatch as a farewell gesture,

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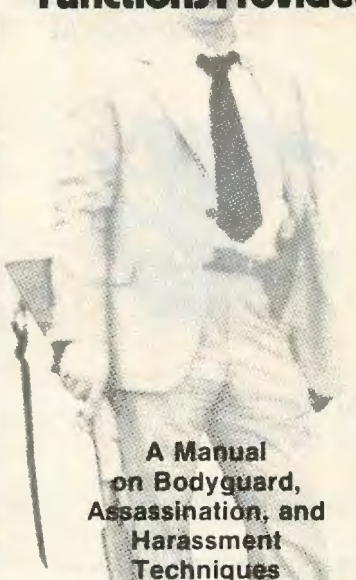

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being blamed for "inviting Ben Rothman to the bush," ad nauseum.

I had submitted a resignation earlier, but had asked it to be withdrawn. That hadn't been done and the Army was now looking for scapegoats. The previous commander of Grey's Scouts, Major Tony Stephens, had submitted his resignation with me. We'd both had a belly-full of harassment; being forced to write letters of apology to Catholic bishops for alleged "coarse and rude behavior" by Grey's Scouts in hunting for terrs in Catholic missions and other chicken-shit directives.

I sat down at the bar in the mess at Inkomo. I knew I loved commanding troops . . . also, this would most likely be my last war. Sadly enough, this was turning into a political struggle, another Korea . . . another Vietnam. Why didn't the politicians let the military do their job? Silly question on the face of it.

"Major, we feel your effectiveness in the Rhodesian Army has been badly damaged." The Colonel fixed me with what I'm sure he thought was a piercing stare. "Further, the stigma" (what stigma?) "attached to Lupane will follow you wherever you go in the Army." Harrumph!

I got up from the leather armchair and saluted. Happily, I managed to stifle a "Good Show, old chap."

"Thank you, sir." My mouth felt like I'd eaten a bad oyster.

Next to me, the new C.O. of Grey's Scouts was dumbfounded. He'd talked me into going with him to Army HQ. to "see where I stood." Now we knew. That was November 1977.

In February, 1978, he called me into his office. "Well, you're not the most popular man in the Rhodesian Army." His words weren't exactly staggering news. "However, the Army Commander says that you can stay, provided you don't do anything *and he means anything* else!" I looked at him. "How does that sound?"

I told him I would think it over, and left the HQ. building.

For one week, I thought "how it sounded." Would I miss it? Like cutting off my arm. But go back to the Squadron under those conditions? The war had changed.

The cops were now showing up wherever curfew-breakers had been shot and taking names of all military personnel involved.

"Just police routine, old chap." Routine, my ass! If so, it was different from what I'd seen during the previous two years.

On 28 February 1978 the Rhodesian Army and I parted company. I felt like a pistolero who'd outlived his usefulness. There were no feelings of regret on my part. I had given them my best shot, but their methods of running a counter-insurgency war were identical to those the United States government had used in Vietnam.

The name of the game was "No win—no military victory!" No-win wars mean exactly that! No commander, worth his salt, is going to put up with this type of thinking for very long. Modern history is full of them: MacArthur, Van Fleet, Ridgeway, Westmoreland and most recently, Singlaub.

I certainly wasn't in their class, but I damned well couldn't adjust myself to deliberately losing a war that could be won.

The South African Airways jet, pulling away from the Salisbury Airport, didn't feel like it was taking me home. Instead, I thought this was rather a case of my leaving a home behind me . . . Rhodesia.

FLAK

Continued from page 8

back issues. This is to be construed as a compliment to your great magazine as the folks "ripping off" SOF are, perhaps, your most critical consumers.

I look forward to SOF as it not only feeds my Walter Mitty fantasies, but it deals with issues not normally dealt with in the intelligence community.

Sincerely,
Carl H. Yaeger
Major, MI-USAR

RLI QUERIED . . .

Dear Sirs:

The Sept. '78 issue's article by Al Venter, "Rhodesia Battles On," makes me wonder how Rhodesia got the reputation of having the "best light infantry in the world." The photo on page 52 shows Rhodesian Security Forces responding to a terrorist's ambush by "going to ground in the kill zone and returning fire." I realize they may be putting out a high volume of fire, but unless the terrorists turn tail and run when shot at, it seems like suicide to just lie down out in the open, that way. One or two competent, determined soldiers could make garbage out of that squad of nice stationary targets!

Also, those bare legs and arms are not only a violation of camouflage discipline, but I can't imagine anyone going bare-legged into rough terrain or heavy brush without having their legs look like hamburger, especially if they had contact . . . or maybe the terrorists are so thoughtful as to only attack on nice, sandy river beds, or grassy meadows.

Sincerely,
Stanley C. Crist
San Diego, California

MOORE ON RHODESIA . . .

Dear Sir:

After reading about Robin Moore's book, *Rhodesia,* in SOF (September '78), I set out to find a copy. No one in the Denver area had one. After a two-month check of every book dealer in the

area I finally found out who published it and ordered a copy for myself.

I can see why no one carried it, as it sure gives a different view of the problems of Rhodesia than is presented in the news media or by our government.

For anyone wanting to order this fine book, write to: Condor Publishing Company, Dept. MO, 521 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10017. Send $2.25 plus 50¢ postage and handling. Takes about three weeks to get your book.

Very truly yours,
Michael P. Lantz
Lakewood, Colorado

Sorry we didn't pass on this information in our September interview with Robin Moore and thanks for taking time to tell us the results of your search.—The Editors.

CLASSIFIED COMPLAINT . . .

Dear Sirs:

I am writing in regard to some of the individuals who place classified ads in your magazine. Some of these people offer employment to persons with the proper training or practical experience but they never seem to deliver what they promise. I realize that recruiting can prove to be a risky occupation but these people should not be allowed to offer jobs which they never intend to give.

I, for one, have both the training and the experience for the life described in your magazine and would very much like to give it a try, but all I have heard is, "We will contact you later." How about giving some of us "new guys" a chance? Remember, everyone is a "new guy" at least once.

Thanks for letting me speak my piece.

Name Withheld upon Request

SEALS . . .

Dear Sir:

I enjoy your magazine very much but I have a question for you. Why is it that although you have informed us on many special forces around the world, so far you have missed the Navy SEALs and the riverine task force in Vietnam? Very little is ever said about the SEALs, anywhere. And I would like to know more about this special unit which is called by some the best in the world.

I would like to have someone tell the story of the riverine forces, who had the job of protecting Vietnam's miles of inner waterways, even though they were put together almost overnight. Their boats and equipment most often started out as something else, and they were always called upon to do more than it was first thought they could handle. You should also mention that when we pulled out of Vietnam the boats were turned over to the South Vietnamese.

FN Charles Pfaff, USN
Titusville, FL

We plan to run an article on SEALs in the near future—next issue or the one after it. Look for it.—The Eds.

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Ringleader In Revolver Safety

Magna Trigger

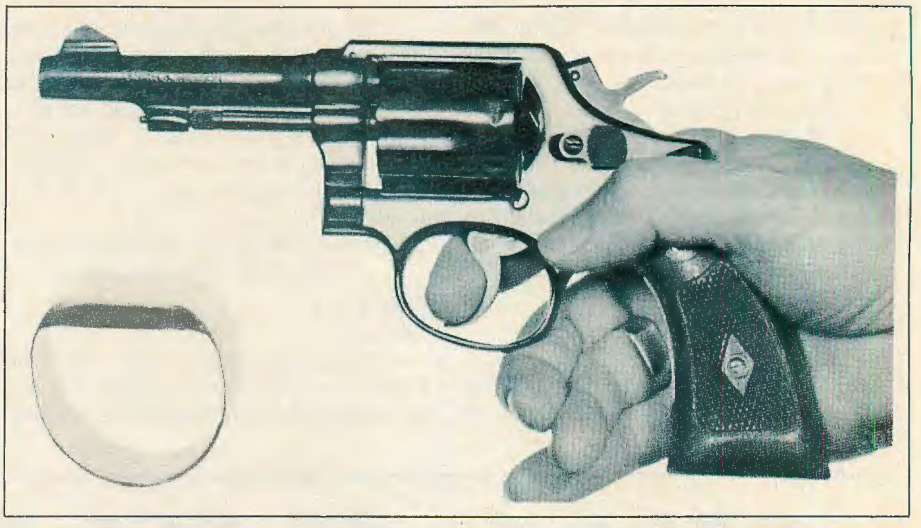
by N.E. MacDougald

Cop killings are all too common these days, so I won't bore you with a case history—besides there's probably one in today's paper. Have you checked? Let me quote one little-known fact: over *one fifth* of cops shot with handguns *die from their own.*

While vacationing recently in California's Bay area, I heard of a super-safety for handguns. I tracked down the inventor, Joseph E. Smith, and interviewed him at his home in Sunnyvale. Smith hails from Gary, Indiana, but was raised in Orlando, Florida. He attended the University of Miami in 1953 and moved to California that same year. He invented an ear-contained hearing aid in 1968. And developed a behind-the-ear voice paging system.

Shortly thereafter, Smith began developing Magna-Trigger™. He didn't have a gun at the time, so he went to the local police chief and within 20 minutes, walked out with the commander's personal revolver. Now, *that's* salesmanship. The fact that a year prior, a Sunnyvale officer was shot with his own gun probably didn't hurt Smith's cause.

Since conceiving Magna-Trigger™, Smith has refined it so that there is only one moving part. Basically, the system works as follows: The non-magnetic stainless steel ring contains a small samarium magnet. One reason it's small is that samarium magnets sell for $400 a pound; another reason is it's the most powerful permanent magnet known. It is strong enough to demagnetize a standard alnico *(al*uminum, *ni*ckel, *co*balt/magnet.



Above: As magnetic ring nears device, "safety" is removed. "Civilian Rings" won't work on police weapons and vice versa. Insert: Unornamented stainless steel band does not draw attention. Magnet (flat spot) must be oriented toward grips.

Smith and Wesson (only) revolvers are altered (see photo) such that the trigger rebound block cannot move rearward when the ring is more than a half inch from the pivoting device (safe mode). When the ring nears the pivoting device, the trigger rebound block functions normally. Simplicity itself. Construction techniques make Magna-trigger™ impervious to temperature changes, shock and water. The unit I inspected was top quality. The machinist knew what he was doing.

Smith has just completed modifying all S & W Model 19s for a police department in Ohio and says he gets inquiries from other law enforcement agencies daily.

Now we come to the bottom line. Just how fail-safe is Magna-trigger™? Smith began quoting various facts and figures and police chief's names. But that wasn't the "proof" I was looking for. And I told Smith it wouldn't sell our readers, most of whom would require some concrete demonstration. I asked Smith if he had any ammo in the house and he looked at me askance and answered affirmatively. Perhaps he had heard rumors of just how pushy we SOF Editors are.

He returned with a handful of factory Winchester-Western .38 specials. I asked him if I might load the piece and attempt firing at him. He thought about it long and hard, then acquiesced. I was happy for Smith and myself that the trigger could not be pulled. Even my large farmer's hands could not overcome the mechanical advantage inherent in Smith's design. I unloaded the Model 66, slipped the ring back on and dry-fired several times. I respected Smith's device now, and I respected him too. FEW inventors will put their life on the line like that.

Magna-Trigger™ costs about $95 installed.

Magna-trigger™
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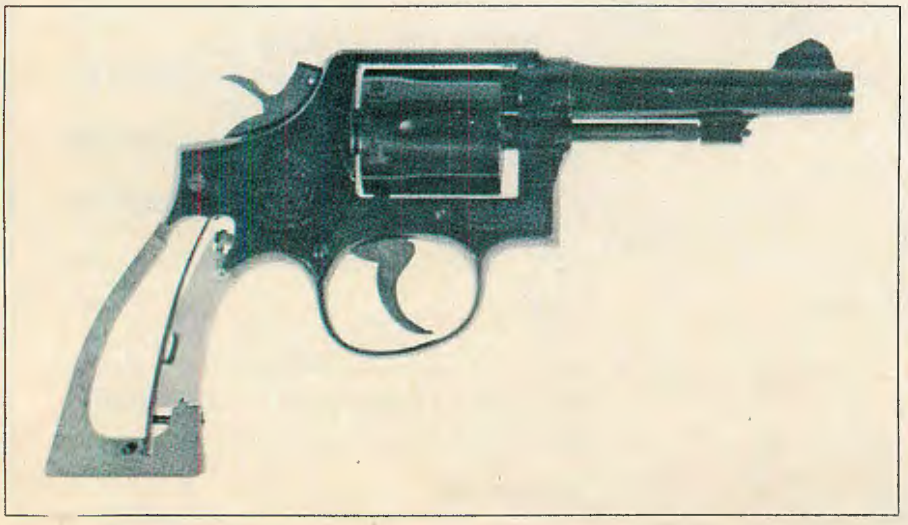
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

Editor's Note: Smith received the 1976 First Place $5,000 Police Science and Technology Award from the International Association of Chiefs of Police for the development of his invention.

Below: With grips removed, cuts in frame can be seen where alloy insert replaces part of front strap.



COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT

Continued from page 24

The final product is a quality item. The Devel M-39 conversion is a small, pocket-size pistol about the size of a PPK/S that can spit out eight 9mm 115 grain H.P. rounds at over 1100 feet per second. This is a serious package for a gun that can be carried without much bulk.

Custom features such as ambidextrous safety, checkered custom backstrap, hooked trigger guard, three custom-fitted magazines with Beretta style floorplates, and many other touches are standard. The Devel is matte finished with a hard electroless nickel plate. A luxury touch is added with micarta grips with cartridge counter window included for quick inspection of loaded magazine capacity status. While this may not be a practical feature, it certainly tops off a gun that is one of the nicest examples of custom work around. It will certainly make the Devel M-39 conversion a good investment for the gun enthusiast who wishes to make a wise investment.

The prices of quality custom pistols have increased surprisingly in the past few years. All machine work and modifications are done according to strict print requirements. The springs are replaced in the gun with new ones engineered to make a super functioning sidearm. A solid barrel bushing is mated to the slide; thus accuracy is more than acceptable for combat pistol ranges.

Charles Kelsey has repeatedly tested the Devel conversion in our combat matches to find any weakness that his design may have. It was offered for use by others in these matches, and the result has been that most who tried it now have one on order. He listened to the comments of those who tested it and made needed changes. Competition against shooters using high quality service autos was a hard way to go; however, Kelsey restated that his M-39 Devel conversion was designed as a close-range combat gun with concealment as a prime factor.

One problem that has plagued 9mmP. auto pistols for some time is the wide variance in ammo. Primer hardness is always a question, as is overall case length and extractor groove depth. Each Devel conversion is furnished with a case length gauge that also checks extractor groove depth. It can double as a key chain, and shows the lengths that Kelsey has gone to in his quest for quality gun modification.

As a crowning feature, each pistol is supplied with belt, magazine pouch, and choice of holster design of the owner's personal tastes. The leather work is contracted to Gene DeSantis, 1601 Jericho Turnpike, New Hyde Park, N.Y. 11040. Gene is a specialist in concealment holsters and supplies many federal and state agencies with his rigs. For the man who wishes to use the same gear issued to Customs and Secret Service agents, then DeSantis is the man to contact.

After all the work and modifications, the M-39 Devel may just be the most comprehensive package offered in the trade. Remember, this is a specialized design made for a special purpose. It isn't for everyone. For the professional who needs such requirements the cost of this conversion on your S&W M-39 auto is $357.

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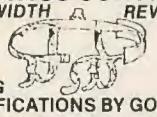

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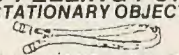

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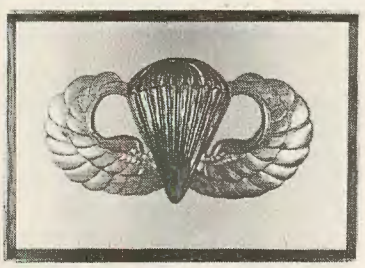

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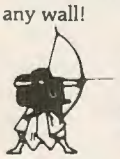

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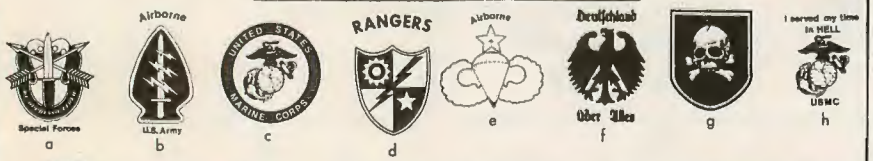

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one of Milt's best sellers. The double thickness holster has velcro tabs on the back to match the velcro backed belt. This way the holster position is always solid. It is worn on the right side over the trouser pocket slightly to the rear of the appendix. Regardless of hand position, it is very fast from this location.

Many shooters use this rig in the cross draw mode. The forward rake holster is a natural for cross draw carry and offers ease of draw for the off hand. I have been using my Special in the cross draw position lately and find it very useful. Milt Sparks' success in custom holsters has been greatly due to the fact he supplied rigs for combat autos when most other sources were very limited in their offerings.

A month ago I test fired a Sile-Distributors-importation prototype-9mm auto pistol made in Italy by the firm of Bernardelli. The pistol was in the hands of top New York City pistolero Jim Cirillo for his evaluation. This interesting pistol offers selective double action or a single action with cocked and locked override. The pistol had excellent handling characteristics, with low bore line position in the hand, advanced grip angle, and fast combat fixed sights. Since the lock-up system allows for a fixed barrel, the gun gave superb accuracy. The Bernardelli feeds all bullet styles reliably and uses a unique magazine release that is pushed forward instead of in like the Colt design.

The trigger suffers from the popular European military three-stage pull. The take-down system needs refinement on the method of securing the take-down latch.

However, shooting it was impressive. Rick Miller and I used it on half "El Presidentes" and got perfect pairs on each target in under three seconds. This performance out of a pistol that was totally new to us was very promising. We shall look forward to testing a productionline version when they hit the market.

Revolver shooters have needed a quality holster design for practical matches for some time. To date most wheelgun users have made do with standard police style holsters or the more specialized Safariland Model 13.

Milt Sparks has come to the rescue with a custom rig that looks ideal. It is simply a "Hackathorn Special" for revolvers. He uses the Hank Sloan tension welt system. It can be adjusted to hold the revolver secure enough for somersaults and yet allow a smooth quick draw. It is complete with decorative stitch that enhances the belt and holster.

Wheelgun users would be wise to give it a look. It can also be worn cross draw if desired. In that position it is out of the way if a rifle or shotgun is to be carried. It can double as a concealment rig for use under a medium to heavy coat.

IN REVIEW

Continued from page 30

With all its shortcomings, **War Story** is still a tale one would enjoy even over drinks in a bar. For one thing, it is a patriotic account of the mixed blessings of the Vietnam War too often criticized by media, and the great unwashed of our society. For another, Morris is one of the many who dedicated himself to his country and the conflict in Southeast Asia with courage and self-sacrifice, and it was these people who actually won the war on two occasions, only to have victory yanked out from under them, by the politicans. This perhaps explains a lot of his soul searching, and it's easy to accept his statement late in the book: — "The fact is that I have no certain idea of what the meaning of this book is, nor what it says about me, or my comrades and the war," because so many vets came back with those same personal feelings. For those of you who still sustain the "Warrior spirit" and still get "that" feeling when you hear "To The Colors," **War Story** should give you an enjoyable evening. Keep an eye out for more Jim Morris books; he's going to improve with age.

Tet 68

Continued from page 39

of my life. We didn't seem to be in any spectacular danger of being overrun and it didn't seem possible to counterattack, so I studiously avoided doing anything rash. A lot of guys who were getting in on their first fight in a long time, or their first and only one ever, though, did wonderful flamboyant deeds of derring-do.

About two in the morning I was lying behind a pile of sandbags with two other guys. The chaplain's assistant and another kid, who was passing through from Charlie Company, came running down the street just ahead of a long machine gun burst and slid down behind the sandbag wall.

"Sir," the chaplain's assistant said, a beefy Italian kid from the Bronx or New Jersey or some other place north or east of Little Rock. "Sir, me and whatsisname here are going to go down that street and knock out a sniper or two. You want to cover us?"

"Well, if you're going to do that," I said, "I reckon I better."

The kid grinned happily and I poked my head up and sent a long burst across the street as they ducked around to the right and dived across the street and down the alley between the two-story houses. I saw one of them fire an M-79 as they ran. The other was pulling the pins out of grenades as fast as he could and throwing them into open windows.

I kept changing magazines and firing at moving shadows all the time they were gone, the other two guys and I behind our

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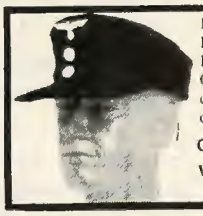

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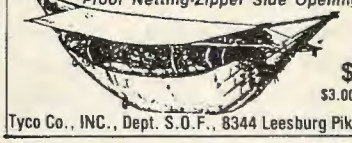

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An SOF Guest Editorial . . .

CBS STRIKES OUT

by Craig Jones

CBS has once again presented us with a hard-hitting documentary—Bill Moyers' "The Battle of South Africa." This documentary was keeping with the tradition established by CBS. It was a shallow piece of work produced by charlatans to be viewed by a sixth-grade history class or a college freshman sociology class. Bill Moyers and the other intellectualoids of CBS are not communists. They probably don't even think of themselves as being leftists. They are liberals. Liberals who honestly think they present a balanced, truthful report. But they are looking through a distorted camera.

The situation in South Africa is simple to understand. The "right" solution is impossible to discover. In South Africa there exists a class of rulers who, if they permit the blacks to vote, might be commiting political and cultural suicide. It is not easy to place your property, jobs, and maybe even your life in the hands of another class of individuals whose past performances are not encouraging. Maybe these fears are groundless. Of course Bill Moyers and his ideological brothers will state that they are. But they also told us that the fears of those living in South Vietnam and Cambodia before the "liberation" were unwarranted. It is easy to sit back in the security of your life and possessions and to moralize.

Then there is the charge that the whites have no right in South Africa. Do the whites in the United States have the right to rule at the expense of the American Indian? If American Indians outnumbered non-Indians 10 to one and Russel Means was their spokesman, would we have given them the right to vote? Are the Israelis going to give the Palestinians the vote?

The Afrikaners consider themselves a white tribe of Africa. A tribe that has been living in that area long before many of the blacks, seeking a better life, migrated to South Africa. Thus to them the question of whether they have a basic right to be there doesn't exist.

What upsets me is that the documentary didn't even explore the fears of the whites, as if these fears or concerns play no role in an in-depth study of the economic, political, and sociological aspects of South Africa.

However, there were the usual one-sided presentations. Photographs of police shooting into crowds. Photographs of wounded and dead. A picture of a father carrying his dead child shot by the white police. An absence of photographs of dead whites and blacks murdered by terrorists. Perhaps Moyers just couldn't find any.

One photo remains clearly in my mind. It is of a young black man, dead or dying, chained to a tree. Truly horrid. But no caption. No explanation. For all the viewer knows this individual could have been a government representative murdered by the rioters. But of course we really know who murdered him and why.

Moyers always referred to the black terrorists as urban guerrillas. It connotes if not a more romantic image at least a more palatable one. Then there was Moyers comparing the terrorist movement in South Africa to the warfare used by Castro to gain power. And remember we supported Castro and even if he did go sour, we did support his methods. Of course, the two methods are nothing alike. But then Moyers is a television impressionist and not a student of warfare or history.

But Moyers did present South Africa's side on occasion. "The government of South Africa says" that the blacks are economically better off than in other African countries. "The government of South Africa says" that. . . . Get it? This is government propaganda. What do you expect the government to say, silly? Well damn it, Moyers, is it true or not? He doesn't tell us. Likewise, why doesn't he tell us how democracy is working in the other African countries? Why doesn't he comment on tribal loyalties causing fighting in other parts of Africa? He interviewed a leader of the terrorists waging war on Rhodesia, who comes across as a mixture of Robin Hood and Moses. Why doesn't he interview a leader of the blacks who are working with Ian Smith peacefully? Well, we know why he doesn't.

I don't know what the answer is for South Africa. Hopefully something can be worked out along the line that Ian Smith is trying in Rhodesia. (Whether Smith will be allowed to pursue his goals is another problem.)

As in most conflicts a case can be argued for both sides. But what upsets me is that CBS only chose one side to argue.

worst time. We were almost out of ammunition, and appeared to be surrounded on two sides by the enemy. If they penetrated the housing area to our right we'd be encircled on three sides and have only the paddies to take to for escape. It was a bad position to be in. Also our defenses inside the compound were pathetic. We had only the buildings and one little sandbagged enclosure around an 81mm mortar, and that was only one sandbag thick. If you leaned against it, it would topple over.

Charlie had a mortar set up, as near as I could figure, on the same hill as the wonderful old huge white Buddha that sits benignly on the crest overlooking the city. From wherever it was they could walk mortar bursts down the main street leading up to the sand bag wall. The mortar walked bursts down the street until it reached the end of its range, and that was close enough to send fragments into the sandbag wall. But no closer. If they'd had enough sense to displace it forward they could have decimated the defenders of the little signal compound.

It was quite bad then, and at that point things could have gone either way. But then we started to get some breaks. Frank arrived with all the ammo in the world. We unloaded it gratefully.

"Have any trouble?" I asked.

Frank grinned. "Not really. An MP stopped us on our way to the hospital and asked for a pass, so I showed it to him." He held up his M-16. "Called him a lot of dirty names. Also I almost ran over two Air Force guys out walking their Vietnamese girl friends."

"How about the ammo dump?"

He shrugged. "Well, it wasn't really any trouble. They didn't want to give me the ammo, but I just drew down on the fucker and they gave me all I wanted."

I clapped him on the shoulder. "Frank," I said, "I like your attitude."

"Any more patients? he asked.

Since we had plenty of mortar ammo now, we could start putting out flares and a little return fire. I helped unload some of the ammo and sat down behind the sandbags to open up the cans. They were just like great big cans of Spam, only painted olive drab. It was sort of relaxing to sit behind the semi-circular wall of sandbags and pull the big key off the bottom of the can and then roll up the strip around them, then take out the black cardboard cylinders that held the mortar rounds and pull out the shell and then take the charges off the end. It's been a long time, but as I recall they had eight charges crimped onto the bottom. They were 1½ inches across, square, with a small hole in the middle, like oiled paper, only thicker. We were firing the mortar at such a short range that we weren't using the charges, only the propellant in the shell.

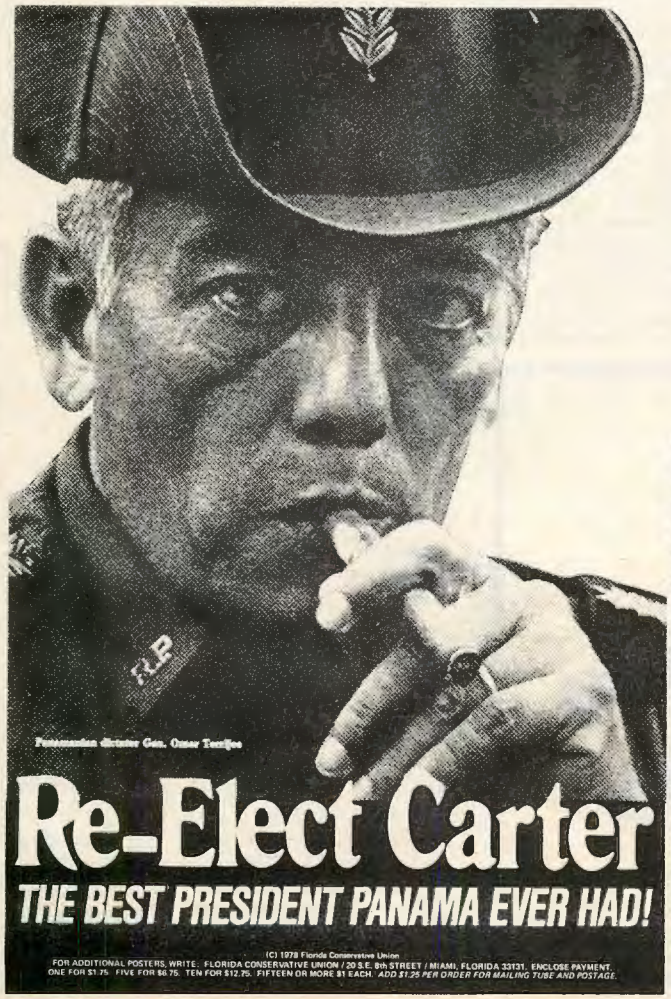
It was such a simple, mechanical task that I thoroughly enjoyed it. It didn't require any alertness at all, and I was tired of the constant scanning of the street for flickering shadows or muzzle flashes, which I never saw.

The sergeant who was acting as gunner was a burly fellow, and quite loquacious. I found out he was from B-50, which was one of the Special Project B detachments, and had been newly installed at Ban Me Thuot. We chatted between blasts from the mortar as I stacked the shells up beside him. The B-50 Mike Force was one of the battalions of the Dam-Yi Division, and I think all of the Americans knew that, though none of them would admit it, certainly not to another American that they didn't know.

I felt so good after our talk that I didn't worry at all about the Tet Offensive, which was, after all, nothing but a welcome break in a boring routine.

When I read the reports of Tet in the papers and the news-magazines later, it was with plain shock and amazement and finally fury, a cold sinking rage that hasn't subsided yet. The stupid bastards didn't know a victory form a defeat.

So what if they attacked in the cities? Anybody that knows anything at all about the military knows anybody can attack anywhere anytime they want to. Attacking is one thing and winning is something else again. Tet was a kamikaze attack.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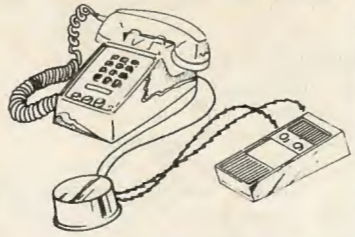

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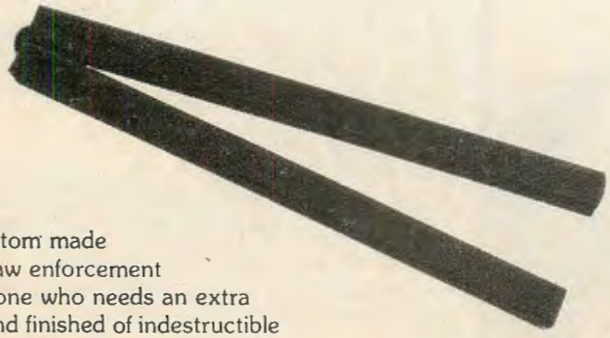

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Later, more than a year later, most of the journalistic fraternity were prepared to admit that Tet was a military defeat for the Viet Cong, but still insisted that it was a psychological victory for them. What they wouldn't admit was that it was a psychological victory only because journalists didn't do their job, which was to find out what was really going on and report it, rather than be shook up by what any rational person would consider a fun party.

These are the facts about Tet. The ARVN found itself during Tet. Units that had never fought well before, or thought about fighting at all, did a creditable job. Public opinion was mobilized against the VC for daring to profane the Tet holiday, and the cities were alienated, when before they had been entirely indifferent to the war except as a profit-making venture.

Just in our own little area there, when the Mike Force, which was Montagnard, came through to mop up and check the place out, Vietnamese housewives who, two days before, wouldn't have walked across the street to spit on a Yard came out of their houses with tea and cakes for them and hailed them as liberators. Vietnamese actually *feeding* Montagnards. Tet was such a bad fuckup for the VC that it is scarcely describable, but the press reported it the other way, and people believed it.

American journalists, pah!

But at the time I could hardly wait for the stories to come out, because it was such a beautiful story. We had waited for years for the V.C. to come out and fight, the U.S. Army being too stupid to go down to the villages and ask where they were, and then they finally came, and right on schedule the U.S. and ARVN armies waxed their ass. And then nobody believed it.

So much for believing what you read in newspapers, or what you see on television.

Anyway, I finished unwrapping mortar rounds and picked up my rifle and went back up to the sandbagged gate. I sat there by the wall most of the night and fired at flickering shadows, which were either NVA running across the street or shadows from falling flares moving through the smoke that drifted across the street.

Oh, those poor suffering bastards, the NVA. They were so stoned, though, that they probably enjoyed the experience as much as I did. The body of one of them lay about 20 feet from me. He was on his back, with a tremendous hardon, which is something that happens to corpses. Sometime during the day somebody told me that early that morning when the NVA first hit the place, he was accosted by five Mike Force guys and he just grinned and turned and ran straight down the street. Naturally they cut him in half.

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The poor bastards we were up against. When the Mike Force moved through the next day they found over 200 bodies and enough documents to indicate that we had fought off two battalions that night. They had sand tables set up and their assault plan meticulously worked out and rehearsed, as usual.

On the sand table layout for the signal compound they had each of the guard posts carefully plotted and the number of defenders and the kind of weapons they expected to find there. They didn't take any chances. They threw entire platoons up against little two-man guard posts where one guard had a BAR and the other had an M-1 carbine.

Only what they found when they came was the same two guys who were supposed to be there backed up by a couple of Mike Force (we got one platoon of them sometime during the night) and five or six totally insane Special Forces clerks, out for that one big fight, with an inexhaustible supply of ammunition. One of those guys was a kid who went AWOL off guard to get in on the fight. He was put in for a Bronze Star and a court-martial on the same day. I think they finally decided to cancel both actions and let it go at that.

So these NVA would come skidding around the corner to take this little easy guard post with one automatic weapon, and eight M-16s opened up on them, plus the BAR and the carbine, because those guards caught the spirit too. The NVA just crumpled and fell back and regrouped and tried it again, only to run up against the same wall of lead.

We had quite a few LAWs that Frank had got for us too. LAW stands for Light Anti-tank Weapon, and is fired from the container it comes in. Pretty neat, comes wrapped in a little cardboard tube with a plastic sight on it and an electrical trigger. You sight, fire the rocket, and discard the tube. Beats a bazooka all hollow. At one point during the night one of those NVA platoons went up against this one post to our immediate right. In amazement I watched an American break and run over a little wall behind their post. I couldn't figure what he was running for, because he was protected in the post and out there he was fully exposed and they were firing all around him. I guessed he was just a nervous clerk who had cracked under fire.

Then I heard him yell, "DON'T LET 'EM GET AWAY. I'M GOING FOR ANOTHER LAW!"

That was pretty much the tone for the whole evening. It was the happiest time I had spent in almost a year in Vietnam.

At one point, about two a.m., they set fire to all the houses around the compound, the idea, I guess, being to catch the signal outfit's fuel dump on fire and burn us out. It looked like the burning of Atlanta all around us. But the fuel dump itself didn't catch fire and we didn't get little wall of sandbags. The roar of gunfire was constant all through the night. Two or three minutes after they left I saw the chaplain's assistant and the other kid come bursting back around the corner and I fired over their heads as they charged back across the street and grabbed a gatepost to slide in beside me.

"How far did you go?" I asked.

"Maybe two-three blocks down the street," said the chaplain's assistant. I whistled. I wouldn't have taken such a chance for anything. If anyone had been looking down from one of those windows they'd have been sitting ducks. I'd done all sorts of equally stupid things at Buon Beng and got away with them, but that was when I was young and thought I was immortal. I suppose that belief is the best armor a young soldier has, as long as it lasts. If an old soldier tried a stunt like that he'd be so paralyzed with fear that the vibrations themselves would draw fire. Anyway I was glad they'd got away with it.

"Thanks for the covering fire, sir."

I smiled. "Oh, my pleasure."

They were gone, bursting for the cover of the buildings behind, running the fully exposed half block down the street that you had to cover to get there.

I made that same run 10 or 15 times during the night, not of necessity, but just because when I got bored with one thing I'd go do something else. My thigh muscles were sore for four days afterward. I hadn't tried to sprint like that since high school.

That was later, though. It was only about seven o'clock when Frank Orians left for the ammo. Actually that was the

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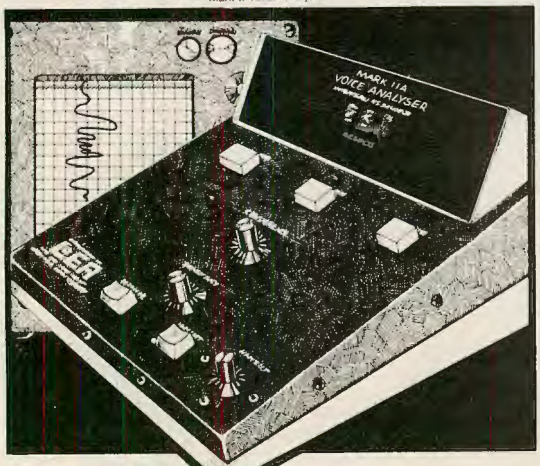

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burned out. We just sat there all night and shot at everything that moved.

The next morning another Mike Force company showed up to relieve us. By that time I was sitting on an old ammo box among all the olive drab debris and eating cold C-rations, just like a real combat soldier.

We hadn't had a man shot all evening, and they were glad to hear it, but their news wasn't so good. Larry O'Neal had been wounded and would have to be evacuated. Ducky Millard, the Colonel's driver, had gone along downtown with the Mike Force and they had been shot at and somebody said get down, and he looked up to see what they wanted him to get down for, and got shot in the head. The kid should have known better, because he had his left nut shot off, same as I had, when he was a door gunner on a chopper. We used to kid about it. I heard of four or five guys who got their left nuts shot off, but none who ever got the right one shot off. Isn't that strange?

And Joe Zamara got killed. He had been a captain about three weeks, and was due to go home the next day on an extension leave. But he had to get in on that one last fight. He would have been back in a month anyway.

When I first published the story about the Tet Offensive in the *Green Beret* magazine I said he was going home at the end of his tour, which is what I thought. Some guys from the Mike Force, highly indignant, came over to set me straight that, "By God, Joe Zamara wasn't the kind of candy ass who would go home just because his tour was up. He meant to come back."

Rhodesian Goatman

Continued from page 55

might wreck it totally, the chances of the occupants coming out unscathed were fairly high.

Next came the choice of weapons. I plugged for an LPD, the 9mm Rhodesian submachine gun that is ideally suited for operation from a vehicle in the event of ambush. Next preference was the 7.62mm FN, the standard issue rifle for the Rhodesian and South African security forces. As the weapons were being supplied by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, I had conceivably a wide selection to choose from, including Stens and Portuguese G3s (both prone to jamming), Uzis and even captured RPDs. On the other hand, being government meant that I had to take what was given and be thankful for it. After many days of hassling with several government departments, I was presented with an FN and 40 rounds of ammunition, plus the request that I was never to fire it on automatic, since it wasted too much ammunition. In the circumstances I could hardly complain. At the time, train

drivers were being issued with WW I bolt-action .303 Lee Enfields.

My mission, if it could be called that, was to enter three Tribal Trust Lands along the Botswana border and buy goats from the local Africans. I was provided with a fleet of five trucks which could hold a total of 480 goats. Depending on the District Commissioner (DC) whose TTL I was in, a detachment of Guard Force personnel would also be provided to pull security for the whole operation. I was to be in the bush approximately 3½ days a week. Bulawayo was the base. It was there that the live goats were sent to be slaughtered before being railed south. Apparently, the goats were a valuable export commodity and the government, as well as my employer, were anxious to resume buying.

It was in Bulawayo that my employer was centered, and it was also the town where I spent the remainder of my time when I wasn't in the bush. On the surface, a quiet town. Get to know it, and it has as much to offer as Salisbury. In fact, many people with adventure on their minds arrive in Salisbury and rarely leave except for short trips into the country, with Bulawayo being considered country.

One suggestion I do make for those intending to visit Rhodesia is to spend several weeks in Bulawayo. Try Grey's Inn on Sunday morning when the farmers come in for morning tea and discuss their security requirements. Or the Holiday Inn during the week where the talk is where to find people with no military commitments who would be willing to carry a gun for odd jobs in the bush. Even in the Underground Bar of the Souther Suns Hotel one frequently encounters offers of employment that require a knowledge of firearms. For those foreigners working with weapons in the bush, the usual gathering place is at the twice-weekly dances at the Waverly Hotel. In Bulawayo, people are easier to know, information easier to find.

My first foray into the bush was in the company of two Guard Force blacks armed with .303 Lee Enfields. The goat buying was a complete failure. Apparently, the natives were being wary. It was the area in which the first buyer had been shot. Procedures had been altered drastically in an effort to improve security. Instead of driving to each individual village, or *kraal,* I had established one central buying point for the TTL. The natives were supposed to bring their animals to me and I would then compensate them for the transport costs. The idea was fine in theory but this particular buying point never proved a success. In addition, it was one area that made me nervous. Not only had the last buyer been killed here but there was no military or police presence within miles.

My two Guard Force "protectors" were totally inadequate for the job at hand. Their weapons were next to useless and they had trouble remembering to carry them. Guard Force is not army. Essentially, it is civilian blacks in uniform. Some are good at their work. Most are bad. I used to call them the pretty boys — pretty damned awful.

The major compensation for this particular area was that I was able to sleep in the DC's rest camp behind security fencing and flood lights. The walls were rocket-resistant, and sand-filled shields covered the windows. In peacetime the DC would set up his office in the rest camp and consult with the tribal chiefs. Late afternoon would see him hunting kudu and impala. Now, he seldom visits the place and never stays overnight.

In intelligence terms, the area is affected. Intimidation of local natives is high. Schools are empty. Young blacks have all gone over the nearby Botswana border. Old blacks are not talking. This is Nkomo's territory, the terr leader who started late in the war but is fast making up for lost time. There was a dusk-to-dawn curfew but at time of writing no government presence to enforce it.

As I kept returning here to buy goats, I took more and more precautions. The actual buying point became a sandbagged emplacement. I varied the speed and timing of entering the TTL. Occasion-

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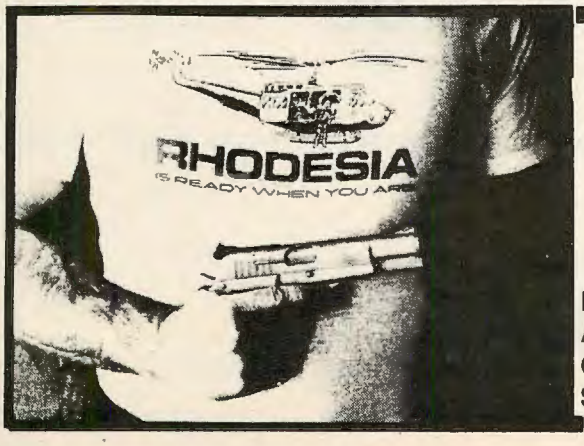

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ally, I would ride with the goats and allow a black to drive the jeep. Always the FN rifle was at hand, so near that it became an extension of my right arm. The political sympathies of my 20-strong black staff were hard to determine. None were for the government. Some didn't care. Some were for the terrs. I believed that the terrs could only get to me through them. I solemnly promised that I would machine gun them first and the terrs second. Being the last white goat buyer in Africa was fine. I just didn't want it to be written on my tombstone.

The next buying point some 100 km down the road provided me with a little more peace of mind. It fell under a different DC who provided me with 10 well-armed Guard Force blacks. They were under the command of a corporal, had a variety of automatic weapons, had seen combat in northeastern Rhodesia, and were generally in good shape to mount patrols and hold night ambush positions. The terrs had only just started to infiltrate this particular TTL. Consequently, the natives were friendly, the goats plentiful. Even so, after our night perimeter had been established I would frequently move out undetected and sleep in the bush, more mindful of the snakes, lions, and wandering herds of elephants than the possibility of terrs stepping on me. The key to survival seemed to be never to sleep in the same place twice and never allow anyone see you go to sleep.

The third buying point was the hottest in terms of terr activity. It was situated about 20 km north of Beit Bridge. The TTL was cut in half by the main north-south road, which defined the limit of influence between Mugabe's terrs and those belonging to Nkomo. Occasionally, they fought each other. Frequently, the government was the target, with mines and ambushes taking a heavy toll in men and machines. Always, the native villages were intimidated one way or another. The local rest camp had been burnt out and anti-Rhodesia slogans painted over what remained of its once pristine white walls.

Unarmed terrs frequently came and observed the sales, checking who sold what for how much. After the sale, the terr would know how much to ask for a donation. Guard Force personnel and myself were under strict instructions not to look for trouble. Our sole objective was to buy goats and secure my employer's $15,000. One day while we were merrily buying goats, terrs robbed a liquor store only a half km from the buying point. It was annoying to operate under such tight restrictions. The strange blacks who drifted in and out of the sales were obviously terrs. All I could do was to report their presence to authorities back in Beit Bridge.

You might wonder what this job was worth. In salary, $850 a month. Other perks brought one's take home pay to about $1200. The goat job itself occupied only about 20 hours over a 3½-day week. The remainder of the week was mine. It may not sound high by American standards but it is more than adequate in Rhodesia. It was a typical bush job, one of many that are presently available in Rhodesia for the civilian who is prepared to take a little risk. It was unusual in that few white civilians venture into the bush alone these days. One is usually with another white companion.

Rhodesia is not a mercenary situation. It is a place where the civilian with military skills and nothing to lose can carve out a way of life for himself. In the process he can have a damned good time: not as hectic as Bangkok, or as varied as Saigon, more like a cross between Sydney and San Diego. Rhodesia needs you. Go soon, and good luck.

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French Foreign Legion Update

Continued from page 63

Two homes for retired legionnaires are operated by the *Federation des Societes d'Anciens Legionnaires.* These are located at Auriol, Bouches-du-Rhone, and at Balme Les Grottes near Lyon. Readjustment services for ex-legionnaires are offered at Marseilles, Paris, and Offenbourg, in addition to those at Puyloubier. The Legion takes care of its own.

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Service Information et Historique
de la Legion Etrangere
B.P. 78
13673 AUBAGNE (France).

Legion candidates are not obliged to reveal their true identities, but the Legion does conduct discreet inquiries for security purposes and to make sure that it does not recruit fugitives from the law, with the exception of petty criminals, whom it is authorized to sign on.

The Legion general staff, therefore, knows the real identity of every recruit but keeps it strictly confidential. If a noncommissioned officer in the Legion wishes to become a career officer or wants to obtain certain civil documents such as a driver's license, he must use his true name. With the proper background and under favorable circumstances, a soldier of fortune may proceed far in the French Foreign Legion.

INSIDE THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION TODAY

As the drums rolled and trumpets blared out *Le Boudin,* the official *Marche de la Legion Etrangere,* a khaki-clad formation wearing white *kepis* and green and red epaulets was observed slow-marching in the 88-step-a-minute Legion cadence under the Arch of Triumph this past July 14, as part of the Bastille Day ceremonies in Paris. This sight is the living external symbol of the French Foreign Legion, a body of disciplined adventurers and professional mercenaries performing a peacetime parade for the public with select members from the 1st R.E., 2nd R.E.I., 1st R.E.C., 2nd R.E.P., and the 61st BMGL participating in the observance.

To understand the living soul inside the French Foreign Legion today, one must experience the back-breaking work of road building in the Amazon forest by the 3rd R.E.I., or a dusty motorized recon patrol in Djibouti by the 13th D.B.L.E., or the taste of cold beer on the beach at Puka Rua by the 5th R.M.P. One must recall the sacrifices at Camerone, Argonne, Bir Hakeim, Dien Bien Phu, and elsewhere, and to learn to keep on advancing under enemy fire with half his face shot away. This is the essence of disciplined professionalism.

Not all make it into the Legion, not all make it in the Legion, and not all make it out of the Legion, but it's well worth the try.

"Vive la Legion!"

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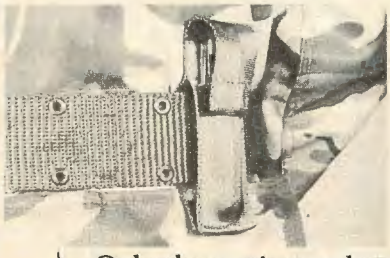

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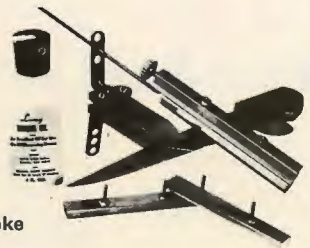

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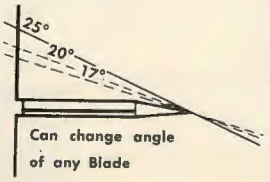

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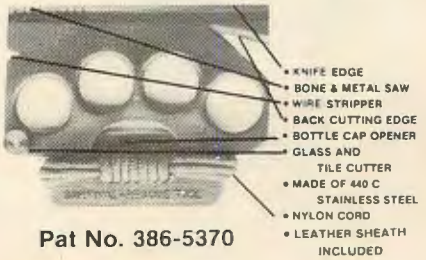
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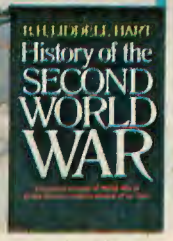

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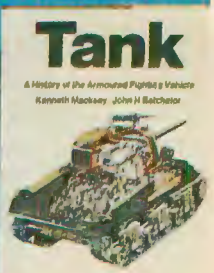

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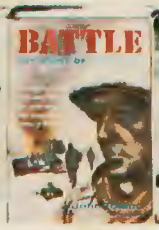

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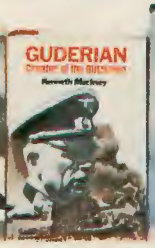

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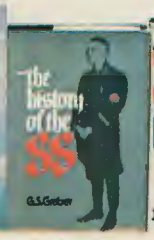

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